



### **Runaway Taskforce Purpose Statement**

The Purpose of the Runaway Taskforce is two-fold:

- **Prevent youth who are exhibiting runaway risk factors and behaviors from entering the juvenile justice system, by ensuring that appropriate community resources exist and meet the needs of youth.**
- **Ensure the justice system is effective, compassionate and empowers youth and their families to succeed while building an environment of mutual trust and accountability.**
- Welcome and Introductions
  - Present: Nicole Seymour, Krynn Pekny, Christine Henningsen, Jim Hubbard, Lt. Tracy Sherer, Colleen Roth, Amanda Nawrocki, Lakeisha Phelps, Janee Pannkuk, Karla Dush, Debora Faga
- Activity
  - Guest Speaker-Lakeisha Phelps
    - Spoke to the group
    - Group discussion:
      - We need to allow kinship relationships to matter.
      - Is a group home better than a youth center?
        - In group homes they focus on behavior.
        - In shelters it was better because they tried to get past the behavior to the core of the problem.
      - This group's focus is on the middle school age range; how do we engage them to discover the reason they are running? If they're not system-involved, what do we do with them?
        - If they run they need to have a safe place to go; shelters are a good place to go.
      - A lot of times these youth have no one they can trust or depend on. That would make a huge difference if they had some kind of support system, someone they can trust and talk to.
      - There are some good foster parents out there, but there are quite a few who continue the mistreatment the youth have been experiencing. Often, the youth are not believed when they try to report the mistreatment.
      - We don't do a good job of evaluating the services we are recommending for these youth.
      - Youth are being re-victimized for being a victim.
      - What is available for running youth, when the home environment is the reason they are running and we don't want them to become system involved? What are our options? Shelters, churches?
  - National Runaway Safeline: Professional Development Trainings – tabled to next meeting
    - Train the Trainer – Submitted an application for a grant for this training. Think about the below items and we will discuss at next month's meeting.

- Who should attend?
  - Goals for those in attendance (willing to teach the curriculum, train others in their organization, report back to NRS via the NRS pre/post test)
  - How do we message the invitation to them? Does anyone have connections at the identified agencies?
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- Decision Making/Next Steps
    - May send out a little bit of homework in preparation for next month's meeting.
  - Feedback Survey – Handed out

**Next Meeting:** Thursday, September 13th, from 8:30am-10am, UNO Barbara Weitz Community Engagement Center, Room 221

**OYS Mission Statement:** Across Douglas County, our vision is a **comprehensive, coordinated, and community-wide** approach to **juvenile services** that **eliminates** the need for youth involvement with our justice system while maintaining **public safety**.

For **all youth** who do enter our justice system, our goals are to provide **effective, compassionate and individualized** support that empowers youth and their **families** to **succeed** and to build an environment of **mutual trust and accountability**.