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
  - Jill Anderson, Rosy Htu, Jim Hubbard, Taylor Newton, Krynn Pekny, Colleen Roth, Shelly Salter, Tracy Scherer, Cara Stirts, Dee Wright, Stephanie Sorensen, Jennifer Beck, Amanda McNeil, Jessica Coffman, Andrea Wright, Keenan Page, Sha Paw, Carmen Chagolla, Octavia Bradford

- Activity
  - Missing Youth Advocate Prevention discussion
    - Project Harmony’s MYS program:
      - Reviewed over 800 OPD reports; OPD is their pilot program
      - Briefly described the MYS program
      - The next MYS Team meeting is December 18; talk to Taylor if you want to get on the mailing list
    - Heartland Family Service (HFS) started a program about a year ago (data handout attached)
      - Their grant runs for 3 years
      - They have expanded their impact to include the male perspective and include the Bhutanese/Nepali community
      - Have an open referral process
      - Have found a great partner in OPS with truancies
      - When a referral is received, Rosy starts with contacting the family either by phone or in person or both
      - Rosy sets up a therapy appointment, but a lot of the kids are on the run so getting them to the appointment can be challenging
      - 90% of the kids that HFS sees from the Karen community are involved with drugs
      - Their program also has an in-home therapist
      - Work on building relationships with the kids and the families
    - We are asking people to reach out in the community to build partnerships with the families
    - The kids and families need to have someone they trust, that they can call directly at any time
    - Organizations cannot work alone on these issues, but if the organizations work together in this area, that is the collaboration that is needed; identify what each group’s strengths are and have this group let them know how they can assist
      - Girls, Inc. would be able to bring girls into their program and are able to provide transportation; it is girls only, but they would be able to contact Northstar to help with the boys
      - OHB has programs that overlap what this group is doing and have an open referral process
      - Transportation is always a big issue
• Creating the support network would be an immense thing
• Latino Center of the Midlands mostly works with the schools and are building relationships with the kids through that arena
• YouTurn is trying to increase their caseloads; they have the mentoring component but would like to develop the support network – they deal mostly with women and their age range varies (12 and up)
  ▪ Rosy relayed that she has several kids who are now in DCYC that have been there for over a week, whose parents have not been informed about the visitation policy, and Rosy has not been allowed to visit them; Jen will send Rosy her contact information and get the visitation information to Rosy so she can pass it on to the parents. (Bring this item up with the Policy & Advocacy Work Group)
  ▪ Project Harmony has developed a caregiver aspect to their services for runaways
  ▪ Organizations would like to hire more people who have been through this lived experience, who may not fulfill the education “requirements” but who have become people who would like to be able to make a difference in working with youth and their families
  ○ Co-chair nominations – tabled to next meeting

• Decision Making/Next Steps
  ○ Debora will send emails out to all attendees who provided an email address, with the OYS Interest Survey attached to be completed and returned in order to become a voting member of this task force
  ○ Let’s keep this discussion going!

• Feedback Survey – Handed out

Next Meeting: Thursday, January 9, 2020, from 8:30am-10am, UNO Barbara Weitz Community Engagement Center, Room 128

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.