

State of Montana
Department of Public Health and Human Services
Human and Community Services Division

Young Parenting Handbook



Photo courtesy of Tess Keck

developed by

Second Chance Homes Network
of Montana

Introduction

We lack the words to refer to the enormous spirit, creativity and determination the homeless pregnant and parenting young women demonstrate in trying to sort through the limited options available to them. This booklet is an attempt at defining our goals of success for our Transitional Living Programs.

Thank you to all who walk the distance with the young moms struggling with homelessness and poverty every day. Their commitment to making a better life for themselves and their children challenges us to never give up.

Most of all, they offer us the deepest inspiration. If they can transform their lives, we can certainly be there to support them on their journey. With our support and encouragement they can begin to believe in themselves and their abilities, and soon discover it takes small steps to make big strides.



2010-2011 Second Chance Homes Statistics

Second Chance Homes Network of Montana currently has a total of 39 beds available for homeless mothers in Billings, Helena and Missoula.

Mountain Home Montana

- Housed 24 young mothers and 26 children
- 83% were homeless prior to entering program
- 92% obtained GED or high school diploma
- 20% enrolled in college or trade
- 100% were employed or received job skills training
- 100% had healthy pregnancies and deliveries
- 100% prevented second pregnancy
- 75% obtained permanent housing upon move out

HRDC Harmony House

- Housed 13 young mothers and 13 children.
- 100% were homeless prior to entering the program.
- 31% were taking classes to complete their GED or HS Diploma.
- 38% obtained a GED or high school diploma and enrolled in post-secondary education.
- 85% were employed or receiving job skills training.
- 100% had healthy pregnancies and deliveries.
- 100% prevented second pregnancy.
- 67% moved into permanent housing upon leaving the program.

Florence Crittenton

- Housed 27 young mothers and 24 children
- 33% were homeless prior to entering the program

- 82% were taking classes to complete their GED or HS Diploma
- 100% were employed or receiving job skills training
- 100% had healthy pregnancies and deliveries
- 91% initiated breast feeding
- 100% prevented second pregnancy
- 64% moved into permanent housing upon leaving the program
- 80% chose to parent/12% chose open adoption

Second Chance Homes Success Stories

Jodi, Mountain Home

Jodi was 16 years old when she first moved into Mountain Home. She was 9 months pregnant with her son, John. Jodi found herself homeless after her mother kicked her out of her home when she discovered Jodi was pregnant. Jodi's mother gave her an option, "either put your child up for adoption or leave my house". Jodi came to Mountain Home, because being adopted herself, she did not want to choose adoption for her own son. Jodi and John have lived at Mountain Home for 1 ½ years, and during that time Jodi was able to graduate from high school and has been accepted to college while John celebrated his first birthday at Mountain Home. She is in the process of getting into her own apartment, and will be transitioning into independent living soon.

Jennifer, Harmony House

Jennifer gave birth to twin girls in August of 2008. In November of that same year she lost her second born twin to SIDS. Her remaining child was removed from her custody shortly thereafter. When Jennifer applied to the Harmony House program she was homeless after being evicted from the hotel where she had been living with her sister. She entered Harmony House in hopes of regaining custody of her daughter. Staff members supervised

weekly visits with her child, gradually increasing the length of these visits. She attended counseling and parenting classes during the transition process successfully meeting all requirements of the Department of Family Services. She was successful in building a strong bond with her child. After four months she was reunited with her child and full custody rights have since been restored.

Jennifer has grown into a caring and attentive mother whose daughter is her greatest joy. She will start her junior year this fall at Montana State University-Billings where she is pursuing a degree in Human Services. She has successfully made the transition to living in her home with her daughter and continues to do well.

Johnna, Florence Crittenton

My name is Johnna and I live here at Florence Crittenton. I came here when I was pregnant and 19. When I first arrived, I didn't think I would be able to be a good mother or have a good job, now my outlook has totally changed. In the year I have been here, I've learned to be a confident mom thanks to the helpful staff.

I didn't think I was good enough to go to college but I have now completed two semesters at the Helena College of Technology; I am studying Nursing. I want to become an RN. So far I am doing great, passing all my classes with A's and B's. It should only take me another two to three years to get my degree. Another cool thing Florence Crittenton has helped me do is get my own apartment through low income housing. I am at the top of the waiting list for a two bedroom; I should be getting a call any day. I could have never imagined these goals, let alone completing them, without the help of Florence Crittenton. I am truly thankful. I don't know where I would be without this awesome place!

Florence Crittenton has specialized in therapeutic residential care for pregnant and parenting teens and young women, their children and families for 110 years by providing support, therapy, education and housing. The facility is modern, centrally located and within

walking distance of Helena High School, the Project for Alternative Learning and UM- Helena.

Second Chance Homes Best Practices

Positive Youth Development Approach

We consider positive youth development a core concept of the program and follow the philosophy outlined in *Understanding Youth Development: Promoting Positive Pathways of Growth* developed for the Family and Youth Services Bureau. We recognize that youth have a powerful voice and they are part of the solution. Our focus is on helping participants to reach their full potential by helping them to develop the skills they already possess and encouraging them to build leadership skills and get involved.

Principles of Positive Youth Development

- Healthy messages to adolescents about their bodies, their behaviors and their interactions.
- Safe and structured places for teens to study, recreate and socialize.
- Strengthened relationships with adult role models such as parents, mentors, coaches or community leaders.
- Skill development in literacy, competence, work readiness and social skills.
- Opportunities to serve others and build self esteem.

Developmental Assets

The Search Institute has identified a framework of 40 “Developmental Assets” that are building blocks that all youth need and that are considered essential to a child’s well being. Studies have shown that the more assets youth have the more likely they are to be successful in their lives. These assets include both external experiences which provide young people with support, empowerment and boundaries and the internal values,

strengths and commitments that they need in order to thrive. There are seven basic categories including caring support, empowerment and valuing, boundaries and expectation, constructive use of time, commitment to learning, social competencies, and positive identity. Providing Intensive Case Management based on their strengths and using Search Institute Developmental Assets allows those working with youth to help them grow to be healthy, caring, and responsible adults.

Strength Based Approach

Strengths based practice is a social work practice theory that emphasizes people's self determination and strengths. Strengths based practice is client led, with a focus on future outcomes and strengths that the people bring to a problem or crisis.

Tips for Working with Young Mothers:

Three R's

Relationship

- The number one factor in working with teen mothers is the relationship, the basis of all human interaction.
- Listen, be open-minded and honest, build trust and be available.
- The stronger the relationship you build, the more young mothers will trust you and turn to you for help.
- Keep in mind these young women have not experienced healthy relationships, you may be the first person who has ever listened and taken the time to care (adults have often been their abusers).
- Have passion for the work that you do.

Respect

- Be honest, even if it is uncomfortable.
- Do not judge, even when young mothers make poor choices (most of their behaviors are developmentally appropriate).

- Show respect and most often young mothers will reciprocate.
- If young mothers know you respect them, they will tell more, ask more and learn more.

Reality

- Teen pregnancy and parenting is real.
- Whether or not our society believes teen pregnancy is an important issue, it is on the rise again.
- The US has the highest teen pregnancy rate in the industrialized world.
- Abstinence will help delay sexual activity among some teens, but it will not solve the complex issue of teen pregnancy.
- The reality is that society needs to come together and work to prevent teen pregnancy in a realistic way and fund programs that set young mothers up for success.

Additional Resources

The Search Institute <http://www.search-institute.org/>

Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment and Curriculum
<http://www.caseylifeskills.org/>

The National Campaign <http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/>

The National Resource Center for Youth Development
<http://www.nrcyd.ou.edu/>

The National Florence Crittenton Foundation
<http://www.thenationalcrittentonfoundation.org/>

The National Florence Crittenton Rights and Resources Guide
<http://www.thenationalcrittentonfoundation.org/pdf/CrittentonBookletForWeb.pdf>

Program Overviews



Transitional Living Program

Mountain Home Montana is a nonprofit organization that provides both housing and services for homeless young women ages 16-24 who are pregnant or parenting. Mountain Home is located in Missoula Montana. Mountain Home provides a safe environment for mothers and babies to live while mothers learn essential life skills that will allow them to become self-sufficient and prepare for independent living.



Mission

To provide a safe, loving home where young mothers can discover their strengths and their children can experience the joys of

childhood.

Program Goals

Mountain Home Montana provides a safe environment for mothers and babies to live while mothers learn essential life skills that will allow them to become self-sufficient and prepare for independent living. Mountain Home Montana's campus is located on the city bus line, across the street from Community Medical Center, and walking distance to park and grocery store. Mountain Home Montana provides 24-hour staff support, supervision and training, clinical case management, individual therapy, therapeutic group, life skills classes, parenting classes, house meeting, and a family dinner each night. All participants are required to re-enroll in an education program and pursue job training or employment. Participants pay a security deposit, pay monthly rent and participate in household chores. Many social service agencies provide on-site services to participants at Mountain Home Montana.

Our goal is to assist young women in achieving self-sufficiency for themselves and their babies by helping them:

- Develop Parenting skills
- Learn Life skills
- Complete education
- Obtain permanent housing
- Improve health for mother and child
- Reduce subsequent pregnancies

Program History and Future

Mountain Home was established in 2000 after Bonnie Hamilton donated her home. Mountain Home currently operates 11 transitional housing units for young mothers and children. The facility also has a Children's Center and Community Room that

will be utilized for life skills trainings, parenting classes and community events.

Capacity 2010: (6 moms and up to 8 children)

Capacity 2011: (11 moms and up to 15 children)

Mountain Home Montana provides a Transitional Living Home with 6 bedrooms, each mother and child(ren) has their own fully furnished room and access to all shared common areas.

Mountain Home Montana provides Transitional Living Apartments with 5 apartments, each mother and child(ren) has their own fully furnished apartment.

Community Resources

- Childcare Resources
- Early Head Start
- EFNEP
- First Call For Help 211
- Futures
- Human Resource Council
- Lifelong Learning Center
- Missoula City County Health Department
- Office of Public Assistance
- Willard Alternative High School
- YWCA

Contact Information

Address: 2606 South Avenue West, Missoula, MT 59804

Website: www.mountainhomemt.org

Email: info@mountainhomemt.org

Phone: 406-541-4663



Harmony House Transitional Living Program

The program philosophy of Harmony House Transitional Living Program is to help people to help themselves. We aim to assist homeless individuals and families develop the skills they need to become self-sufficient, capable of demonstrating healthy parenting skills, finding and maintaining employment, and living in permanent, safe, affordable housing. Transitional Living is a community of living. This community is a partnership between residents, mentors, staff and volunteers, and has been formed to fulfill the goals of the program.



Harmony House Transitional Living Program offers young mothers ages 18-21 up to 18 months of on-site transitional living and up to six months of aftercare. Harmony House has two

residences in Billings with room for 12 young women and their children. Residents may share a 4 bedroom home in downtown Billings located next to HRDC and the Office of Public Assistance or 2 bedroom apartments located in a complex close to downtown. Both locations have a Resident Manager/Life Skills Coach on site.

The program's purpose is to assist young people in developing the independent living skills they need to become self-sufficient positive parents. Participants take part in life-skills training, parenting classes, peer support groups, budgeting and financial literacy and recreational activities and are required to complete 30 hours of productive time each week. They also attend the weekly dinner and life skills night. They are enrolled in GED/High School Classes and work training programs and receive support from the Intensive Case Manager and on-site Resident Managers. All participants are referred to area resources for additional trainings and support.

Harmony House Philosophy Elements

- An environment is created in which they can achieve their potential.
- Personal relationships grounded in honesty, mutual understanding and trust are the foundation of this environment.
- Every interaction with participants is a chance to build on those relationships to help them achieve the above goals.
- As an inherent right, each person can expect to be nurtured and supported in reaching their goals.

Community Resources

Dress For Success, WIC, Better Babies, Angela's Piazza, LaVie Early Pregnancy Clinic, Family Services, Inc., Riverstone Health, Catholic Social Services of Montana, Expanded Food and Nutrition Education(EFNEP), Lincoln Center Adult Education Program, MSU-Billings, Rimrock Foundation, Young Families, Family Tree Center, Housing Authority of Billings, Mental Health

Center, Interfaith Hospitality, Yellowstone Office of Public Assistance, MRM Women and Family Shelter, YWCA, YMCA, Salvation Army, Lutheran Social Services, Planned Parenthood of Montana, Reading Matters, Tallman Dermatology, Family Support Network, District 7 HRDC including Youth, WoRC, Wheels to Work and Childcare Assistance programs.

Contact Information

Address: 7 N 31st St, Billings MT 59101

Website: www.hrdc7.org/programs/transitional_living_program

Email: aensign@hrdc7.org

Phone: 406-247-4709



Florence Crittenton changes the future... two lives at a time, by providing the highest level of therapeutic care to young women and

Our Beliefs

- We believe that the birth of a baby offers a unique opportunity for change and growth in the life of a teen mother and her extended family.
- All young parents need love and support so that they in turn can love, support and successfully parent their child.
- All babies need a caregiver who can nurture, love and care for them if they are to develop healthy relationships and reach their potential as adults.

Organizational Information

- Residential & community based programs for young parents
- Pregnant & Parenting young women aged 12-21.
- 12 young women and their children
- Length of stay 6 months to 2 years, average 9 months
- Girls may be pregnant and/or already parenting one or more children on admission

Our Programs

- Licensed Residential Therapeutic Maternity Home
- Licensed Child Enrichment Center
- On site – Transitional Living Apartments
- Community Education & Training

The Differences We Make

- Trauma focused intensive bonding and attachment therapy from early stages of pregnancy through toddlerhood.
- Prenatal and parenting education
- Support for young families with focused attention on parent/child relationships, mental health services, chemical addiction support, family and group therapy
- Educational support
- Career development
- Access to available community services
- Counseling for parenting and adoption as parenting choices
- Independent Living Skills training



Activities focus on empowering young parents while providing the physical and emotional support necessary to be successful. Young mothers at Florence Crittenton receive an individualized plan that focuses on parenting, academic achievement, nutrition education and job skills training and career development. Each client develops an individual plan for success with the help of our licensed clinical team that includes prenatal and parenting education support, individual, group and family therapy, bonding and attachment relationship training, addictions counseling, life and job skills training, and assistance accessing community resources all while in a supportive supervised setting. Childcare is

provided in Florence Crittenton's on-site, fully licensed Child Care Center.

Florence Crittenton's residential program has capacity for 12 young women ages 12 to 21 and their children and is dually licensed as a Maternity Home and Therapeutic Group Home. There are 8 single rooms and 1 double room as well as 2 on-site apartments each with two bedrooms for 2 mothers and their children.

History

Founded in 1900 in Helena, Montana by Charles Crittenton, Florence Crittenton has provided support and life changing hope to pregnant and parenting young women, their children and families from across Montana for generations. Today, Crittenton continues to change lives through residential and community services.

Our Staff

Our treatment team consists of highly experienced therapists and social workers whose specialties include assessments, bonding and attachment, family relationships, addictions treatment, parenting skills, milieu work, infant mental health and therapeutic recreation.

Community Resources

Childcare Partnerships, Cooperative Health Center, CTI, The Friendship Center, Helena School District, Helena, YWCA, Helena YWCA, Helena Housing Authority, Helena Area Transportation, Office of Public Assistance, UM Helena, Lewis & Clark County Health Department, WIC, DPHHS, CASA, Early Childhood Service Bureau.

Contact Information

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