

Testimony In Support of SB 61
Human Trafficking
Presented to the House Corrections and Juvenile Justice Committee
By Sarah Robinson, Wichita Children's Home
March 7, 2013

Thank you members of the House Corrections and Juvenile Justice Committee for allowing me to speak to you in favor of SB 61. The Wichita Children's Home is a 125 yr old child and family serving agency. We offer a shelter for law enforcement admissions and homeless and runaway youth, a mobile street outreach program that staffs the local SafePlace program, a transitional living program for 17 to 22 year olds, a resource center for runaway and homeless youth, and a program funded by the Office of Violence against Women to provide services for 13 to 24 year old homeless and runaways who are victims of sexual assault. We see about 5,000 children and youth year. We see the sexually exploited youth come in our shelter, call our crisis line, pop in our drop in center and live in our transitional living programs. Unfortunately, because many highways come together in Wichita, our community is known as an originating site for the trafficking world. This crime is not a new situation, we have seen youth who are victims of the commercial sexual exploitation for many years. They move in and out of programs because their needs are so difficult to address. Sadly, they run from placements and take other girls resulting in more victims. We have been fortunate to work with other parties devoted to the care of these victims as a member of the Anti-Sexual Exploitation Roundtable for Community Action (ASERCA) founded by Dr. Karen Countryman Roswurm in 2006. Under an administrative order, ASERCA serves as the Multi Disciplinary Team to staff this population under Karen's clinical direction.

What has changed is the public awareness of the victimization of youth. In addition, our ability to care for these youth is improving due to our greater understanding of trauma and the complex needs of these youth. The first step in caring for them is to provide immediate safety, medical care, multi level assessment and comfort. They might be scared that their pimp is out there waiting for them. They might be so emotionally paralyzed that they are afraid to reconnect with their family. They might be pregnant by their john. The commitment of DCF to rapid response is exactly what needs to occur. The youth need access to a staff secure setting, at least during their assessment, so they can be stabilized and not runaway endangering themselves and others. Next they need to reinvent themselves, moving from powerless to powerful. They may travel an emotional roller coaster during this transformation. So they may need to stay in the staff secure setting for a longer time in order to receive the care that they deserve. A staff secure setting will provide many opportunities for them to develop relationships with staff and mentors, attend therapy, focus on recovery, receive treatment for their medical problems, attend school and develop a support system in the community. They deserve comprehensive treatment so they can reinvent themselves.

There are wonderful child serving programs in the Kansas who are eager and highly capable of helping these youth reinvent themselves. They need the funding to provide separate services for these victims that are staff secure, intentional, relational, and rich in services.

Let's increase the penalties for these evil doers in an effort to decrease the number of them and in order to improve services to the youth exploited by them.

Thank you for your consideration and for your commitment to Kansas citizens.

WICHITA CHILDREN'S HOME PROGRAM REPORTS

July 01, 2012 through January 31, 2011

A total of 1059 children were admitted for residential care during this period. Law Enforcement placed 901 children for protective custody; of these admissions, 183 were taken into the custody of the state. Contractors placed 136 children with us. Parents voluntarily admitted 22 children into the Home's family preservation programs.

*Who are these children going into custody?

F	90
M	94
Foster Homes	148

Also served:

Independent Living:

- 27 BRIDGES Phase 1 (25 Custody and 2 HHS)
- 35 BRIDGES Phase 2 (4 Custody, 12 HHS, 19 HUD)
- 6 BRIDGES Phase 3 (0 Custody youth, 2 former HUD youth, 0 former HHS youth, 4 former custody youth)

BRIDGES Transitional Living Program: (on 02/01/13)

38 Total Youth in the Program (Phase 1 = 15; Phase 2 = 17; Phase 3 = 6)
(6 open beds at Phase 1; 3 open beds at Phase 2)

- 13 (of 38) are in custody (34%); 13 of 19 custody beds are full (68%)
- 11 (of 38) are HUD (29%); 11 of 12 HUD beds are full (92%)
- 8 (of 38) are HHS (21%); 8 of 10 HHS beds are full (80%)
- 19 (of 38) are graduates in the program (50%)
- 13 of the 38 (34%) are enrolled and attending post-secondary education; 13 of 19 (19 are graduates) – (68%)
- 16 (of the 38 total youth) are enrolled in high school (42%); 16 of 19 (19 are non-graduates) – (84%)
- 3 (of the 38 total youth) are currently working on their GED (8%); 3 of 19 (19 are non-graduates) – (16%)
- 18 (of 38) have jobs (47%)
- 10 are receiving some type of DCF assistance (In addition, all 13 custody youth have DCF benefits)
- 15 youth are parents with 20 children
- 15 (of 19 homeless) are SOS/Safe Place/Basic Center referrals to TLP (79%)
- 1 (of 19 homeless) are previous DCF/JJA youth (5%)

Families Kan Program:

- 3,312 clients have been referred (November 1, 2000 through January 31, 2013)
- 3,130 clients have been served (November 1, 2000 through January 31, 2013)
- 1,870 clients have received mental health services (November 1, 2000 through January 31, 2013)
- 1,417 clients have received drug/alcohol services (November 1, 2000 through January 31, 2013)
- 121 open cases

Of the 19 clients referred to the program in the month of January: 6 were referred as Police Admissions at the Wichita Children's Home; and 13 were referred from other sources. Of the 6 referred as Police Admissions, 4 were admitted to the Wichita Children's Home as runaways.