



**H.B. No. 5030 AN ACT MAKING ADJUSTMENTS TO STATE EXPENDITURES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2015**

**Address the immediate safety needs of kids in crisis by funding the Homeless Youth Program established in 2010 and codified in Conn. Gen. Stat. § 17a-62a**

My name is Carissa Conway. I am the Director of Prevention and Intervention Services at WFC. Since 2003, WFC has provided services to runaway and homeless youth through Project REACH (Reaching Every Adolescent to Create Hope) in Meriden, CT.

Project REACH provides outreach, support services and 24 hour short term emergency housing services to youth ages 13-21. The goal of the program is to empower youth to make choices in the best interest of their safety, well-being and future selves through outreach, counseling, education, and intensive case management. We are one of only four such providers in all of Connecticut.

Project REACH provides critical services to runaway and homeless youth. Since the project's inception, Street Outreach workers made an average of 2000 outreach contacts each year. In 2012, 800 youth (unduplicated) received ongoing services, including survival aid, case management, education and referrals.

Project REACH is funded by a federal grant through the Administration of Children and Families, United Way of Meriden and Wallingford and local foundations.

Here is just one example of how Project REACH assisted a youth:

Molly is a 16 year girl. She accessed services from Project REACH after she and her family became homeless. When Molly got to REACH, she disclosed years of verbal, physical and sexual abuse by her family. Molly's case manager spent countless hours helping Molly to identify support people in her life, connecting her with long term clinical services and listened as Molly told her story. Her case manager set her up with medical appointments and assisted her with transportation to and from appointments and activities. Molly stayed in our short term emergency housing program for 21 days. She was able to stay with a host family that took her in as one of their own. She received numerous hours of support from her host family and was able to witness what a healthy, stable living environment looks like.



Funding from the Homeless Youth Program, codified in Connecticut General Statutes §17a-62a would ensure that runaway and homeless youth would have access to critical services including crisis response and drop in services in other areas of the state where these do not exist.

Respectfully submitted,



Carissa Conway  
Director, Prevention & Intervention Services  
WFC