

## YSS Liaison Report – October 2016

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**Need for Program:** YSS provides a number of valuable programs and services to Story County youth and their families. Their 3 focus areas are prevention, treatment, and transition. Their current priorities are:

- 1- Mental Health Evaluation by Psychiatrist. YSS is one of the largest mental health providers in Story County and the leading provider for low income youth, treating the whole family not just the youth. A Clinical Director is coming in November. (They are experiencing some problems drawing down funds from CICS due to CICS stipulations.)
- 2- Rosedale Crisis. This is an expanded service of Rosedale Shelter, where instead of removing the child temporarily from the home in a crisis situation, an attempt is made to stabilize the crisis at home without removing the child.
- 3- Summer Enrichment. The primary goal is to reduce summer learning loss. The program served 200 youth in Ames and Nevada during 6 weeks in the summer of 2016. Surveys and school data show that most students maintained or increased grade level reading and math while showing improvement in self-concept. The funding request is to continue transitioning from a United Way grant which started the program 4 years ago, to funding under the ASSET process.

Other programs include Mentoring (which is losing some grant funds), Transitional Living (which is losing some grant funds, but has less expense due to rent-free use of a house), and Human Trafficking (a very important program with no ASSET funding request budgeted due to some major grants and contributions). Additional programs include substance abuse treatment, family counseling, nursing coordination, youth development services, pre-employment skills training, and afterschool programs.

**Program Strengths:** YSS has many strengths. A new CEO continues its history of strong leadership. Board members provide governance, are financially accountable, and actively participate in the policy decisions, strategic planning, and long term goals of the agency. YSS is active in responding to community needs and pursuing preventative measures for these problems and its awareness of concerns facing youth is a major asset. YSS has proven to be highly adaptable to the funding and public policy changes in the social service area. YSS believes it must be very proactive in developing alliances, joint ventures, and acquisitions to maintain its position as a leading provider of youth social services. An example is that Francis Lauer Youth Services officially merged with YSS on 7-1-16. This Mason City-based organization has 35 staff and more than 40 years' experience offering services to youth in North Central Iowa. Although not in Story County, one of the goals is to help both organizations be more efficient by working together.

**Program Weaknesses:** While YSS's diversity of funding is strength, the financial uncertainty of state and federal sources of income is always a major concern. Current areas of concern are also the privatization of Medicaid in Iowa as of 4-1-16 which has

caused payment collection problems, and the 12-1-16 upcoming changes to the Fair Labor Standards Act which raises the threshold to \$47,476 under which non-exempt employees must be paid overtime if working over 40 hours per week.

**Financial Outlook:** The YSS financial request from ASSET to support 19 YSS programs for FY 17/18 is up \$50,262 over what was awarded for the current budget year of FY 16/17 but actually down \$3,567 from their request for that year. The total dollar ASSET request is \$603,138 in a proposed total budget amount of \$20,667,985 of which \$3,474,846 applies to Story County. YSS finished the most recent fiscal year (FY 15-16) with a surplus of \$74,356. This was after accruing for \$621,000 of Medicaid accounts receivable, earned but not yet collected due to problems collecting from the privatized managed care organizations. This has necessitated some borrowing to meet payroll. Management feels this will eventually be collected. YSS has also experienced a 46% increase in health care cost, resulting in \$300,000 of additional expense.

**Internal Management:** YSS has a very knowledgeable and experienced management team. Andrew Allen has completed his first year as CEO. He has an extensive YSS volunteer background, other business experience, and is innovative with a high energy level. He facilitated the merger with Francis Lauer Youth Services and recently completed a branding program for YSS named "Youth Standing Strong." YSS has an active board of directors that is not only supportive but evaluates and analyzes programs, staff, and future direction of the agency. They have an ambitious 5 year strategic plan. It is obvious YSS takes service data collection very seriously, has many metrics by which they track client performance and outcomes, and these metrics reflect favorable performance or outcomes. YSS is budgeting a 3% wage increase from FY 16/17 to FY 17/18. (Note: They also budgeted a 3% increase last year from FY 15/16 to FY 16/17, but the actual adopted increase was 26%. This was primarily due to the assimilation of 35 new Francis Lauer employees.)

**General Assessment:** YSS is a well-organized social service agency meeting the needs of the youth and their families in Story County. YSS staff and board members truly care about the organization and the youth in our community. Each year YSS challenges ASSET funders to grow support to increase delivery of these important and needed services to our community, many of which are only provided by YSS. It is very beneficial to our community and for the youth served to have YSS in Story County.