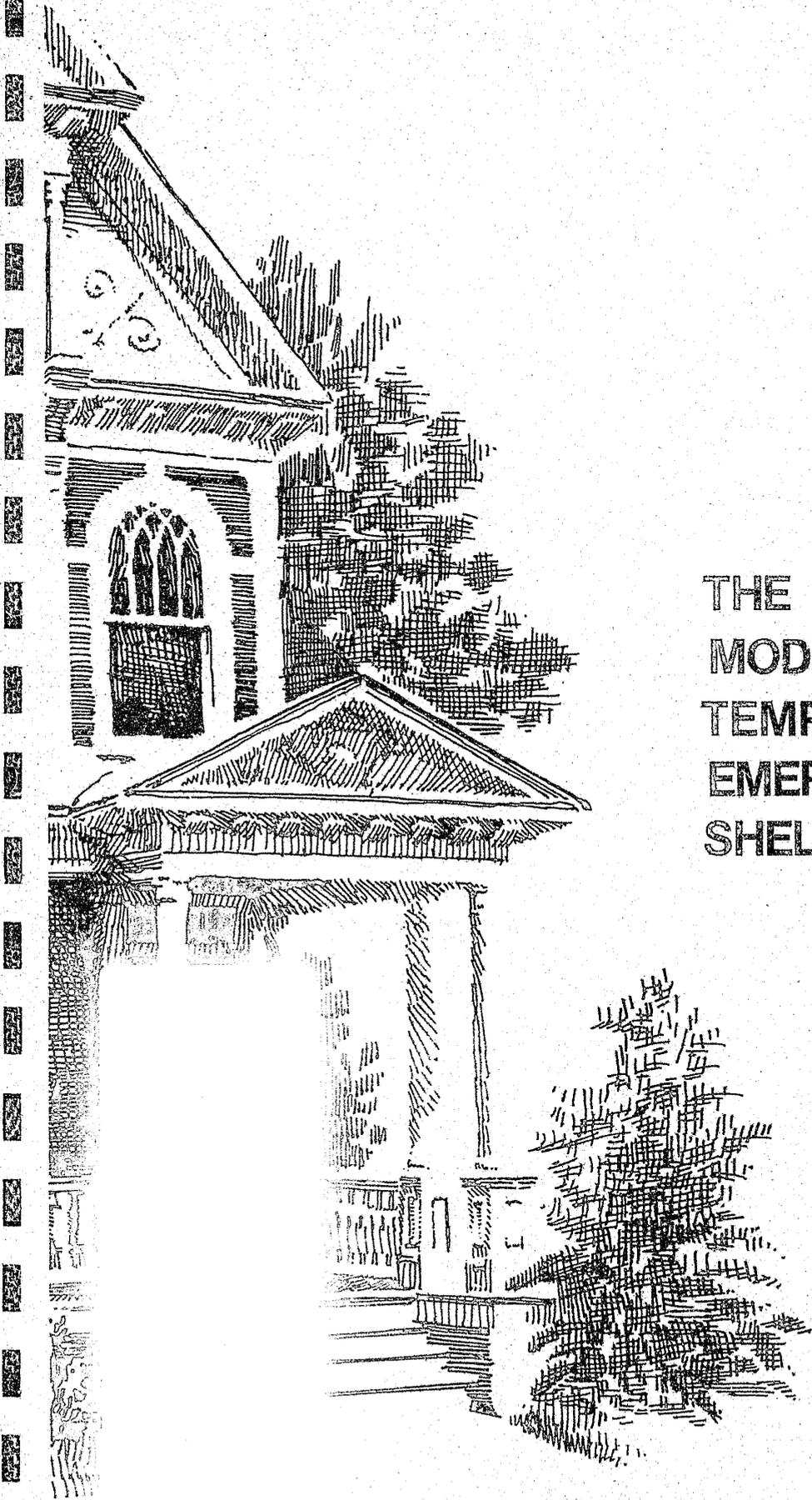


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**THE HOST HOMES
MODEL OF
TEMPORARY
EMERGENCY
SHELTER**

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THE HOST HOMES MODEL OF TEMPORARY EMERGENCY SHELTER

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THE HOST HOMES MODEL OF TEMPORARY EMERGENCY SHELTER

INTRODUCTION

THE HOST HOMES MODEL OF TEMPORARY EMERGENCY SHELTER is intended to provide an overview of this model for individuals and groups interested in exploring alternatives to institutional settings for the emergency care of youth. This paper has been written in response to the numerous requests directed to the Covenant House Consultation Unit for assistance in developing programs for runaway and homeless youth. A brief description of the "Host Homes" model and philosophy will be followed by an outline of the program's components including a delineation of many of the policy decisions which planners and administrators must address in the planning process. Although primarily geared toward people with little previous program planning experience, we hope that this paper will also serve as a checklist for individuals who already have experience and others who are already operating programs.

The need for additional temporary, emergency shelter for youth is evident in communities throughout the United States. In many cases, the need in a particular community is not great enough to warrant the development of a group facility. The geographical spread of the youth in need of services may also make it difficult to find a location for a facility that is accessible to these youth. Zoning restrictions and community resistance are other possible impediments to group care. Additionally, group care is costly and financial resources are scarce. The need for cost effective housing for several youngsters at any one time still exists. The host homes model, then, offers a financially soluble approach to the provision of emergency care.

Anyone intending to develop a program should be aware that laws and regulations which affect the operation of host homes programs vary from state to state and locality to locality. Components of programs which are affected by these differences are indicated throughout the text, to alert the reader to the type of information that should be sought in each state prior to the formulation of program policy and practice. Statutes pertaining to runaways and to program operation may be found in Domestic Relations Acts, Social Services Law, Juvenile Rights Acts, Child Protective statutes, Family Court Acts, Runaway Acts, etc. The specific names vary in each state. We would suggest that an attorney be sought to insure that an agency remains in compliance with the law. Many times, attorneys can be located who are willing to work free of charge for a good "cause" (pro bono). The Center in Rochester, New York utilized a law student for much of their legal research.²

Definition

"Host Homes," also known as "interim homes" or "receiving homes," are those in which a family acts as a "host" for a youngster in need of temporary, emergency shelter apart from his/her own family. Such a need may arise in cases where:

- events that precipitated a runaway episode (e.g., physical abuse at home) make it inadvisable for a youth to return home immediately;
- a brief stay in a host home might prevent family tension from escalating into a dangerous crisis; or,
- a family has "pushed" a youth out of the home.

The host home provides both the youth and the family with a "cooling off" period during which counselors work with the youth and the youth's family to arrive at a resolution to the problem and to formulate a plan to be followed after the host home placement. Youngsters (sometimes called "guests") who are accepted for host home placement are generally under 18 years old. They tend to be youth without histories of runaway behavior and who are not aware of the dangers and exploitation which they will confront on the street.

According to Donna Valley of the National Network for Runaway and Youth Services, the name "host home" was coined in Connecticut in the mid-1970's. Originally, the host families provided lodging, food, and other support services, i.e., counseling, referrals, and transportation. Over time, most programs shifted the responsibility for providing support services to full or part-time employees responsible for the general administration of the program. This relieved the host families from the responsibilities requiring specialized training. It also freed them to concentrate on providing nurturance and support to the youngster in crisis.

Program Goals

A primary goal of a host homes program is the prevention of delinquent behavior by intervening in family problems prior to or shortly after a youngster runs away from home. This results in the diversion of youngsters from involvement in either the juvenile justice system or in the traditional child care system. Rather than placing youngsters in group settings where they may be influenced by youth who are far more "streetwise," a youngster is offered a non-institutional, family setting where he/she can receive support and attention through the crisis period. As stated in the program description of the 4-H Host Homes Program in New Jersey, "The Host Home effort would prevent many youngsters from entering into a lifestyle of delinquent behavior which often follows alienation and rejection in the family-home setting."¹¹

Placement provides parents with relief from the seemingly constant conflict with their child and gives them a chance to view the situation more objectively. With the encouragement of the host homes counselor, the parents may then be able to accept help in exploring those issues which created the crisis¹¹ and the alternatives available for the future. At the same time, the youngsters can remain in their own community and continue to follow their usual routines.

Host Home Placement as Crisis Intervention

The service provided by host homes programs is viewed as part of the crisis intervention process. In some agencies, the host home placement is the primary service offered, while in others, it is part of a comprehensive approach. In the Youth In Crisis Project in Bridgeport, Connecticut, the host home network is one component of their crisis intervention program. After a youth in crisis has contacted the program, an outreach worker meets the youth on his or her "turf" to conduct an initial interview. An assessment is then made to determine whether immediate reconciliation with the family is feasible, or whether a host home or group shelter setting would be more appropriate. The worker accompanies the youngster to his/her home if reconciliation is the agreed upon goal. If return to the family is not the immediate goal, the counselor suggests placement in either the group setting or a host home based on the particular needs and problems of the youth.

Experience has shown that placement can be averted when intervention occurs during the time of impending crisis or immediately after the crisis surfaces. Staff members from host homes programs find that as their crisis intervention service becomes better known in the community, youngsters and parents are more likely to make contact with them prior to a major crisis. This reduces the need for placement.

Distinguishing Characteristics of the Host Home Model

The distinguishing characteristics of the host homes model, which support the goal of crisis intervention, include:

1. The short-term nature of placement with a host family.

In general, host homes programs limit the time a youth may reside with a host family from two days to fifteen days. However, most youngsters remain in programs from three to four days. Although some programs allow a youngster to stay up to 30 days and most will extend the stay when necessary, the short length of stay in a host homes program tends to promote resolution of family problems during the time of crisis. As stated in an article on The Family Connection, a program in Anchorage, Alaska: "at the point of crisis, a family seems more willing to problem solve. [The Program's] staff uses this crisis as an opportunity to resolve family problems before they demand the intervention of the police

or of the court."^{9(a)} The short-term nature of the program compels the youth, the youth's family and the agency worker to begin immediate work to resolve the conflict which created the need for placement. The short stay away from home also minimizes the child's feelings of alienation from the natural family and makes return to the family somewhat easier.

2. The required involvement of the youth's family in the placement process.

Host homes programs often require a youngster's parents to become involved in the placement process (except in some cases where the youth is alleging abuse). Parents are asked to sign consent forms and are often required to participate in some form of counseling. By seeking this commitment from the family, parents are less likely to use the program as a "dumping ground" for unmanageable youngsters.

3. The diversion and prevention emphasis of the host homes program as part of the alternative, rather than traditional, social service system.

Host homes programs most often operate outside of the traditional child care system. Even in instances where the program is operated as a component of a state system, a host homes service is an effort intended "to divert clients from a contact with the juvenile justice system as a substitute for a (status offense*) complaint."¹⁰

Paid and Volunteer Homes

Some host home programs pay host families for the service they furnish while others utilize volunteer families to care for youngsters. In either case, all host families provide each "guest" with a place to sleep, regular meals, and a supportive family environment. Some programs ask host families to supply bed clothes or to provide some transportation for the youngster. Expenses such as medical care, clothing, and most transportation are covered by the agency or the youth's family.

The paid host homes system expands the pool of potential host families by making funding available to them. "Paid" host homes are reimbursed in one of two ways. Most host families are reimbursed for each day of care provided to a youngster. However, in some programs, families receive monthly payments independent of the number of days in which youngsters reside in the home.

A variation of paid host homes is the proctor system. Here, the host, or "proctor," is a full-time employee of the sponsoring agency. One youth at a time is placed in the home of a young (21-30), single person who works intensively (24 hours a day if necessary) with that youth for the short duration of the placement. The proctor then receives a period of time off to compensate for the demands of the job. According to an agency in Massachusetts which operated a proctor program, proctors were difficult to find and retain due to the demanding nature of the job.¹²

The use of volunteer homes greatly reduces the costs of providing emergency care to youth. In some host homes programs where volunteer families are used, the families receive a small stipend to defray the cost of food and of minor expenses incurred by the youngster.

The benefits of volunteer programs go far beyond the financial ones. The youngsters in care benefit from knowing that the host families are committed to *giving* their services; and host families receive inherent benefits through their service to youth and to the community.

HOST HOME PROGRAM COMPONENTS

The following outline is intended to provide program planners with guidelines for developing host homes programs and to alert them to policy issues related to each component. The procedures of incorporating a new program or a non-profit organization, seeking tax-exempt status, and organizing a Board of Direc-

*Status offenses, knowns as PINS (Persons in Need of Supervision) in New York State and by similar acronyms in other states, describe a category of offenses which would not be considered crimes if committed by an adult, e.g., truancy, runaway, incorrigibility.

tors shall not be discussed. It is suggested that legal counsel be sought in these matters. We have also omitted discussion of the needs assessment process. Suffice it to say that the decision to develop a host homes program should be based on the determination, through a complete assessment of a community's needs, that the service is necessary.

A. Administration of Host Homes Programs

1. Responsibilities of Programs

Regardless of whether host homes are the primary service of an organization or a component of a larger system, the operation of host homes requires an administrative structure under which the activities necessary for planning, implementation and management of the service can occur. Those activities include:

- a. general office management;
- b. fund raising and grant writing;
- c. record keeping;
- d. hiring and training of counseling staff;
- e. supervising of counseling staff;
- f. host home recruitment;
- g. preparing home studies (these are evaluations of the host family done by the agency or the state, for the purpose of assessing the ability of the host family to provide care and supervision of youths in their home);
- h. host home training, initial and ongoing;
- i. supervising the host homes;
- j. intake of youths;
- k. crisis intervention—24-hour availability;
- l. short-term counseling—individual and family;
- m. long-term counseling—individual and family;
- n. referral services and liaison work with other agencies; and
- o. aftercare/follow-up services.

The host homes program may contract with other agencies or hire consultants to perform some of the above responsibilities. In larger organizations, some of these tasks (e.g., fund raising, long-term counseling, aftercare) may be performed by specialized components in the organization. In fact, it may be advantageous for people developing small programs to seek affiliation with large local organizations. In states which require homes to be licensed, "home studies" are performed by the licensing agency.

2. Staffing of Programs

The employed staff of a host homes program minimally consists of: an administrator/coordinator; counselors (the number based upon the number of youth in need of services and on the number of host homes); and a secretary/administrative assistant. Depending on the size of the program and how it is linked with other services, the above positions may only be part-time. In some programs, the administrator may also serve as a counselor.

Criteria for employment of a program's personnel depend upon:

- the specific responsibilities of each staff member;
- any requirements specified by regulations governing the operation of the program; and,
- the standards and practices of the local social service community.

It is generally desirable for administrators to have a master's degree in a human service discipline, experience working with youth, and administrative and supervisory experience. A college degree is desirable for a counselor's position. Certainly this is flexible; the value of experience and an ability to work with youth cannot be underestimated.

3. Personnel Practices

As with any social service position, the job of a host homes counselor is potentially very stressful. Too often, worker "burnout" and turnover can interfere with the functioning of the program and affect the quality of services provided to the youngsters. However, staff "burnout" and turnover can be minimized through the provision of adequate training and supervision. In this way, counselors can improve those skills needed to work with youths and families and have the opportunity to vent the frustrations which often accompany work in the human services.

Management experts suggest that ambiguous or inadequate communication between administrators and workers also adds stress to a job. A clear delineation of responsibilities and policies helps to minimize unnecessary tension between counselors and administrators.⁸ The development of a personnel practices manual is one means of making explicit those policies and procedures that affect a counselor's employment. It might include:

- detailed job descriptions;
- lines of authority;
- expected work hours;
- attendance policy;
- holidays and vacations;
- procedures for hiring, evaluating, and terminating staff;
- overtime and leaves of absence; and,
- the availability of in-service training or funding for additional training outside the organization.⁸

Common issues regarding the responsibilities and personnel practices affecting a host homes counselor include:

- a. What will be the size of the case load?

Case load size is dependent upon what are the overall responsibilities of the counselor. If the counselor is to be involved in host homes recruiting and home studies as well as in working with youngsters and their families, then case loads must necessarily be kept small. The host home service lends itself to small case loads where each youth and family can receive intensive counseling for the short period of placement. Five (or less) cases without other responsibilities seems optimal. However, it may be advantageous to give counselors other responsibilities as a break from the intensity of work with youth.

- b. What hours will staff be required to work and how will staff be compensated for overtime, night, weekend and holiday work?

Since it is hoped that youngsters in host homes programs will be enrolled in school or working and because many families have one or two working parents, parent and youth counseling may necessarily have to be done in the evening. However, work with the social service systems has to be done during the day. Therefore a counselor's schedule must be flexible in order to accommodate the needs of their clients. Emergencies will occur at night and on weekends and staff must be available to intervene. Understanding the uncertain nature of a counselor's work schedule, host homes administrators must be willing to compensate workers. This can be done in cases where funding is not available for overtime, by providing time off in compensation for extra or odd working hours. A good vacation, sick leave and personal day policy, and an occasional unexpected day off also provide a means of compensating staff for their hard work.

- c. Who will be on call, how often, and how will on-call be arranged, i.e., answering service, "beeper," etc.

It is necessary always to have staff available for overnight intakes and for emergency situations that occur in the host homes. In some agencies, each staff member is contacted whether by their client or by the agency's answering service when an emergency arises. In other agencies, an on-call person is assigned each night to take care of all emergency situations. In still other agencies, the director, assistant director or the intake worker receive all overnight emergency calls. Distributing home phone numbers to clients may create a situation where the staff member is never truly off-duty. In arriving at a policy on this issue, keep in mind the need for workers to be truly away from the work environment.

- d. Who will supervise the counseling staff, how often and what will be the nature of staff supervision?

Supervision is a time for teaching and reinforcing skills and for providing counseling staff with new ideas and support. It is particularly important to maintain close supervision over new staff members, and to plan weekly supervisory meetings into each staff member's schedule. The supervisor must insure that no matter how hectic the week has been, there will always be supervision time for the staff member to discuss cases. The director or an experienced staff member can be designated to do case supervision or an outside consultant may be brought in for this purpose. The tasks of supervision can be divided between an administrative supervisor (e.g., paper work, scheduling, etc.) and a case supervisor. While this may be useful in those situations where a consultant is the case supervisor, in general, this system places a burden on the staff member to mesh the priorities of both supervisors. This can lead to added work-related stress.

- e. Who will do initial and on-going staff training and what areas will it include:

Ongoing staff training not only provides the opportunity to disseminate information to the staff but also offers another forum for staff to exchange ideas, talk about frustrations and enjoy a break from their regular routine. An initial training or orientation program should provide information about the agency, the job responsibilities and the youngsters with whom the staff will work. Staff training can be carried out by an agency staff member or through hired consultants. Often consultants are hired to develop a training package and to train staff in the use of this training package. Topics for the initial training of staff are basically the same as those for training host parents (see pg.11) but obviously, some of the substance is different because of the different roles. One important issue to discuss in staff training is who exactly is the client. Is the client the youth, the host family or the youth's family? This is a source of confusion in many foster care agencies. The counselors' loyalties may be pulled in many directions. Even if this question is not fully resolved, an awareness that this dilemma may exist is helpful.

B. Recruiting Host Families

The recruitment of host families is an ongoing priority for the staff of host homes programs. The importance of having an adequate number of homes was stressed by all providers of this service. One agency maintains three times the number of host families as children needing them in order to select appropriate families to suite the needs of specific youngsters and to give families rest periods.¹²

Recruitment efforts should aim at developing a diverse network to families so that the diverse needs of youngsters can best be met. One agency suggests that one characteristic of this diversity is the length of time for which a family will accept a youngster. Staff recruit "weekend" and "over-night" families as well as "two week" families.²

In doing recruitment, host homes administrators should first determine whether local zoning laws prohibit the establishment of host homes in particular areas. An additional consideration is the geographic distribution of host home locations. Excessive travelling cuts into the time available for work with the youngsters and families; however, programs which intend to serve large areas may need host homes in a variety of locations to serve youngsters of the entire area adequately.

Recruiting families can be a time-consuming and difficult process. Possible recruitment methods include:

1. Seek media coverage. Articles in local newspapers are particularly helpful;
2. Arrange speaking engagements in schools (e.g., PTAs), with church groups, civic groups, etc.;
3. Arrange speaking engagements in people's homes to talk with their friends or neighbors;
4. Seek recommendations from clergy and local community leaders;
5. Use current host families to recruit friends and neighbors; and,
6. Contact former runaways who have settled down as well as the parents of former runaways.

C. Initial Host Family Screening

Careful screening of host families is very important for ensuring the safety of the youngsters in the program and for maximizing the likelihood of a positive experience for all involved. Families must understand the benefits and risks; and, the staff must understand the motivations and intentions of the people who volunteer.

The screening process begins with either an introductory meeting between a program representative and prospective families, or merely with an expression of interest on the part of a potential host family. At this point, the potential host parents are given information on the agency and asked to fill out a preliminary application (see Appendix A). After the application is received, an initial interview date is arranged. In some programs, the initial interview is conducted in the home of the prospective host family; others schedule group sessions which are attended by several prospective families. While individual interviews can be seen as a more personalized approach to screening and may make some families more comfortable, group sessions often stimulate more discussion and allow families to share their expectations and fears with each other.

The purpose of the initial meeting is to give agency staff an opportunity to talk with the family, to confirm the family's interest and to furnish the families with information about:

- the agency;
- the youth who will be placed with them;
- the problems they can expect and the risks they take; and,
- the agency's expectations of the host families.

Each host family can then be given time to discuss whether they want to become hosts. After this decision is made, a home study is arranged.

In reviewing the preliminary application, the initial interview, and later in the home study, the recruiter should be aware of the following basic requirements in a host family:

1. a minimum age of 21 and no maximum age so long as the person or family is energetic, flexible and able to care for a youngster for the duration of placement;
2. married or single persons, with or without children, who can provide a supportive environment and communicate clearly and openly;
3. for those families with children, a willingness on the part of the children to have a "guest" in their home;
4. the ability to provide adequate supervision in the home;
5. the ability to set and enforce reasonable limits;
6. the ability to provide at least two meals a day;
7. an assurance of the family's good health, insofar as it affects their ability to care for a youngster;
8. in the case of volunteer homes, adequate financial resources to take care of a "guest"; and,
9. the ability to provide adequate space and privacy for the youth in care. While a private bedroom is not necessarily required, sleeping in the living room or in the same room with an adult or with a child of the opposite sex is prohibited. State regulations may also specify the minimum number of square feet acceptable for a youth's sleeping space.

D. Licensing or Approving Host Families

State and local law may require that all host homes or that only paid host homes be licensed, certified or approved by an agency responsible for overseeing the operation of child care or runaway programs. In some cases, this may be a state agency; in other cases, it may be a private agency

authorized by the state to license or approve foster homes. Emergency licenses, generally valid for three months, are available in some states. Usually, licenses are reviewed annually.¹³

In states where licensing is *not* required, a license may still be granted. A license, while it may not be mandated by the state, may be necessary in order to receive government monies or insurance coverage.⁷ Licensing or other forms of accreditation also lend legitimacy to the service, encouraging private funding sources, enhancing the program's credibility with the police, courts and other agencies, and promoting general community acceptance.^{9d} In addition, involvement of a second agency in the host home assessment process provides further support for the decision either to accept or reject a home.^{9a} In instances where complaints are subsequently made against a host family, the involvement of a state agency is extremely helpful.

In some circumstances licensing may be disadvantageous because the process can be time-consuming and the record keeping requirements burdensome.⁷ Some agencies complain that time which could be spent providing services to youth and their families is lost to unnecessary paperwork. At times, otherwise good homes may not meet state specifications and would be lost as resources, e.g., where state rules specify square feet of space per child and the home is too small. Agencies have also found that state-prepared home studies were less comprehensive than their own.

The specific process of authorizing a family to become hosts for youngsters depends on state and local requirements. But whether or not state licensing is involved, a home study of each potential host family is necessary to assess the ability of the family to care for and supervise youngsters. Regardless of who performs the home study, all homes are evaluated along the same general lines. The process includes:

1. One or more interviews lasting from one to three hours in the home with the entire family (see Appendix B). The interviewer may again discuss the kinds of children who will be placed, some of the problems to expect, what the course of placement will be like, and the agency's expectations of the host family.

The interviewer will explore:

- a. the stability of the adult relationship;
 - b. the parental relationship;
 - c. the family members' feelings about youngsters, their families, and temporary care;
 - d. the attitudes of the children toward having other youngsters share their home;
 - e. the interests of the family members;
 - f. the methods of discipline utilized;
 - g. the general physical layout of the home, especially the amount of space and privacy.
2. A physical examination of host family members, including a tuberculosis test. In some programs, complete physicals are required only of the host parents, while the tuberculosis test is required of all family members.
 3. Three or more letters of recommendation (see Appendix C for one possible format). The staff in one agency stated that they did not take this part too seriously until they received a negative letter which was followed up and substantiated.

4. A check for police record, criminal history, and reports of previous or current abuse of a child by a family member. Since it is possible to secure these records, the failure to do so, should a youth be injured or abused by a host family member with a history of criminal behavior or child abuse, could certainly render the agency vulnerable to a lawsuit and perhaps to liability.

While a police record does not necessarily prohibit acceptance of a family, it may be worthwhile to know the nature of the complaints. The procedures for obtaining arrest and conviction records vary in each state. In New York, the State Division of Criminal Justice Services maintains the records of statewide arrests and convictions. Comparable agencies exist elsewhere. Unfortunately, of out-of-state convictions are generally not recorded on a state-kept record.

In instances where reports of child abuse have been filed against a family member residing with a potential host family, this family should be rejected. Families can appeal a rejection on abuse grounds. In New York State, a standardized Clearance Form exists and must be submitted to the State Department of Social Services (see Appendix D). Research will identify comparable requirements in other states.

In the event that a potential host family is not approved, agency staff should meet with the family to discuss the reasons for the rejection.

E. Liability and Property Insurance

Insurance requirements and costs may vary from state to state and insurance company to insurance company. These should be researched thoroughly. For a small agency, coverage can be difficult to find and to afford. This, therefore, is another area in which affiliation with a larger agency can be helpful. Companies already insuring a larger agency may be more willing to add a new program to the policy of an established agency than to start up a new policy.

Host families should be encouraged to review their insurance policies prior to accepting youngsters into their homes. The legal status, i.e. "guest" or "foster" placement, of youngsters residing in host homes varies from state to state. Consequently, the liability of the host family for personal injury to the youngsters also varies. In some states, liability insurance covering injury to the youngster can be carried by the agency. Some insurance companies will insure only licensed homes. Others may extend their coverage to unlicensed homes if the host family's homeowners/tenants insurance policy is the one relied upon. The youth's family, then, may be asked to sign a waiver holding the agency and the host home harmless in the event of injury to the youth. While this waiver may not prevent legal action by the youth's parent, it may discourage it in those instances where the injury was not due to negligence on the part of the host family.

Host families, knowing that many of the youngsters come with problems, should take extra precautions to protect their property. Most agencies do not carry insurance which protects the host home in the event of property damage or loss; the homeowners/tenants policy should suffice. Host homes also should carry coverage for uninsured drivers and adequate liability insurance if they own a car, in the event a "guest" steals their car or is injured in an accident with this car.

F. Host Home Contracts

Written contacts between the family and the agency staff outlining their respective responsibilities are helpful to both parties. They make specific and overt each party's expectations of the other. This can prevent conflicts and make manageable the potentially unmanageable job of the host family. In some states, particularly where state licensing is mandatory, a contract is required.

Contracts vary in specificity and length and may incorporate program policies and procedures discussed or outlined elsewhere. In some programs, a contract is signed each time a youth is placed in the host home (see Appendix E). They can include:

1. What the host home will provide, e.g., lodging and at least two meals per day. The agency's responsibility for all remaining expenses should be made clear. The host family's responsibility for incidental expenses (e.g., school lunch money, recreation, etc.) may be specified as well.
2. The nature (e.g., salary or stipend), amount and period of compensation to the host home.
3. The allocation of responsibility in the event of injury to host family members or damage to personal property.
4. Allowable forms of discipline.
5. Some of the agency's policies and procedures, e.g., the host family's right to accept or decline a youth, the expected duration of each youth's stay, and procedures for insuring confidentiality for the youngsters, their families and host families (i.e., prohibitions on the release of information from the licensing application).

G. Orientation and Training for Host Families

Orientation and training for host families is a critical element in host homes programs. These activities provide the families with:

- information on program philosophy, and on policies and procedures;
- information on the youngsters who will live with them;
- the opportunity to explore their own feelings and how these may affect their interaction with their guests;
- a discussion of emergency procedures and of legal issues such as confidentiality, including when it does and does not apply (e.g., child abuse or suicide situations); are particularly important.
- what is and what isn't the responsibility of the host family (e.g., transportation, paper work);
- what is the responsibility of the agency;
- what is the host family's role with respect to the youth, the youth's parents and the counselor;
- house rules and discipline—what is appropriate and what is not (e.g., corporal punishment is prohibited).

While many of these areas may have already been discussed to some extent, the orientation and training period allows for each subject to be treated in greater depth. Training should continue after the family has had some experience as hosts, when their needs for further information become clearer. In addition to the goal of providing information to host families, the training process should help engage the host families as part of a "team" working to help youth.

The above mentioned material can be covered in a series of group sessions. A Host Home Handbook (described on page 15) is useful as a guide for discussing program policies and procedures. In fact, handbooks can be distributed during recruitment to give potential host families a better idea of what the job entails.

In addition, subjects and skills which host families will find helpful when working with adolescents include:

1. training in crisis intervention;
2. training in communication strategies/parenting skills/behavioral management;
3. issues and problems of adolescence (e.g., sexuality, drugs, etc.) and special problems of youth who are runaways, homeless, have serious family problems, etc.;
4. nutrition;
5. issues of termination—what difficulties to expect when a youngster leaves a host home, emotional aspects and post-placement policies.

In one program, trainers found that exercises which encouraged the host families to reflect on their own adolescence and on what was helpful and what was not, were useful in preparing families to work more sensitively with their guests.² Role-playing of situations that occur with teenagers is also a useful tool.

H. Maintaining Host Homes

The continued existence of host homes programs depends on their ability to retain host families. As mentioned previously, recruiting an adequate number of homes is crucial. After the initial training period, ongoing training is also important as is an agency's ability to provide support for the host families while a youngster is living with them. Different methods of support for the host families are utilized. In some agencies daily contact between the workers and the host families is required when a "guest" is in the home. Other programs require contact within 24 hours of placement and then as needed. Program staff should be available 24 hours a day in the event of an emergency.

A schedule for placing youngsters will also help minimize burnout of families. Some programs use families only once each month, or only a specified number of days per month or per year. Limits on the length of stay insure that relief, if necessary, is a predetermined number of days away. If homes will be needed 24 hours/7 days, then a schedule can be worked out where a family is designated as on-call late at night and on weekends. If there are an adequate number of families, on-call duty should be infrequent.

Matching the youth as closely as possible with the host families is another way of avoiding family burnout. Some families are better able to and/or want to work with youngsters who have particular needs or special problems. The initial assessment of host families will provide the agency with an idea of their particular strengths and weaknesses, and will pinpoint the kinds of youngsters with whom host families should not work.

Other tools (some previously mentioned) used by host home programs to make a host family's job less stressful are:

1. The preparation of a Host Homes Handbook which provides guidelines for the hosts and rules for the youngsters. The host family can refer back to this and also use it when enforcing rules with the youngsters (see Appendix F).
2. The contracts signed by the youth; the youth's family and host family describing the responsibilities of each and the obligations of program staff.
3. A support group for host families, offering parents a forum for airing concerns and working on solutions to common problems.
4. A formal post-placement interview between worker and the host family to discuss the course of placement—both positive and negative experiences.

5. Inclusion of the host family in discussions about their "guests" during the course of the placement and about program policies.

I. **Intake**

Youngsters reach host homes through various means. Often programs are known (or can be made known) to the usual institutional referral sources: the police, the courts, probation departments, other community or child protective agencies, and schools. Youngsters also learn about host homes through friends or acquaintances, or from local publicity.

As with any emergency shelter, placement can occur as a result of a runaway episode from within the community, the state or from out-of-state. A youth might also come to a host home after allegations of abuse have been made against a parent or, as a result of a crisis intervention interview with a counselor from the sponsoring agency or another local agency. Any allegations of abuse or neglect made against a parent or guardian must be reported to the appropriate state authorities so that the necessary steps can be taken to protect the youth or others in the home and an investigation can be made to confirm or disprove the allegation. Procedures for reporting abuse vary from state to state. In New York, a call is placed to the centralized state child abuse registry followed by a written report on a standardized form. The caller can ask to remain anonymous if there is danger of retribution by the alleged abuser.

Once contact is made with a host homes program, the youngster is evaluated by a staff member. Programs often employ a screening/intake form which is filled out during the initial contact with the youngster (see Appendix G). The form allows for standardized documentation of both the acceptance and rejection of youth for a host home. After the determination is made that they cannot return home immediately, youngsters must meet certain criteria for admission. They are generally flexible depending on circumstances such as the age of the child, the time of day the referral is made, or the reason for the referral. Intake criteria include:

1. Age limitations. Most often, programs accept youngsters from ages 11 to 18 or the age of majority in the state. Several programs accept younger children. Age limits vary depending on state regulations and criteria set by funding sources.
2. Contraindications to host home care. Youngsters for whom one of the following conditions exist may be inappropriate for placement in a host home:
 - a. history of violent or suicidal behavior, arson or heavy drug use;
 - b. adjudication as a delinquent;
 - c. history of stealing;
 - d. a pending court case;
 - e. actively psychotic at the time of the interview;
 - f. already in placement;
 - g. severely emotionally or physically handicapped;
 - h. under psychiatric care requiring medication.
3. Parental consent. Some programs require signed parental consent before placing youth in a host home. Others accept verbal consent and seek signed parental consent later. Still others will take the child initially and make diligent efforts to obtain signed consent from the child's guardian. Parents or guardians must be notified as to the whereabouts of their children according to state and federal laws. Except in some instances where the youth alleges abuse by their parent or guardian, federal regulations require that "best efforts" be made to reach families within 72

hours. The laws in some states may be more stringent. All efforts to reach a youth's parents should be documented by staff in order to provide verification that "best efforts" were made should the agency be challenged on this issue.

Parental consent forms may include authorization for the host home program to seek a youth's school, court and other prior records, and may include an acknowledgement on the part of the parent that the youth is free to leave the Host Home at any time (see Appendix H).

Additionally, guardians are asked to sign medical release forms authorizing representatives from the host home program to consent to emergency treatment (see Appendix I).

In many host home programs, parents must do more than consent to placement. They may be asked to make a commitment to work on family problems by agreeing to participate in counseling for a designated number of sessions. This is congruent with the view of host homes placement as part of a crisis intervention strategy and discourages using the host home as a depository for unmanageable teenagers.

4. Contract with the youngster. The youngster is often asked to sign a contract agreeing to follow certain rules in the host home. The contract with the youngster should specify which infractions will result in immediate discharge from the host home (see Appendix J). Alcohol and drug use are universally prohibited. Other rules which may be outlined in the contract include:
 - restrictions on dating or going out;
 - on smoking;
 - restrictions on driving;
 - curfew;
 - on use of the telephone;
 - an agreement that the youth will attend school (depending on age);
 - an agreement not to distribute the telephone number and address of the Host Home;
 - an agreement to accept adult supervision.

Like the parents, youngsters often must agree to participate in family, individual or group counseling for a designated period with either program staff or at another agency.

The youngster accepted for a host home placement is, as previously mentioned, matched to a host family. Again, it is important to know the kinds of youngsters each host family is willing to accept and to be aware of the strengths and weakness of host families in order to facilitate successful matches and, therefore, successful experiences for both the youth and the host families. The sex, age, race and religion of the youngsters, and the location of the host home in relation to the youngster's school and home are some of the other obvious factors to be considered. Less obvious are those matches which may be ill-advised because of the situation from which the youth fled, e.g., a youth who has conflicts with elderly parents might not do well with an older host family.

Inevitably, youngsters will be rejected by the program because they are unwilling to follow the rules, cannot function in a family setting or do not fit intake criteria for some other reason. Staff, therefore, need to develop a network of community contacts so that these youngsters can be referred elsewhere. It may also be useful to have homes that are willing to accept just such as an emergency placement overnight while more appropriate arrangements can be made.

J. Policies and Procedures

The clear delineation of the policies and procedures maintained by host homes programs make the jobs of both program worker and host families easier. As mentioned previously, a host family handbook provides a convenient method of communicating policies and of insuring that host families have available written confirmation of these policies should questions arise concerning each party's responsibilities and what to do in certain situations. Since the needs of host families and of program staff do shift, policies and procedures should be continuously reviewed by staff and revised when necessary.

The following is a list of many of the basic policy decisions which should be made prior to recruitment of host families and the opening of a program. This list may also serve as the basis for a host home handbook.

1. Length of Stay

The length of stay generally varies from two days to thirty days and average lengths of stay (3-4 days) are often much shorter than the maximum allowable stay. The maximum stay may be dependent on state regulations. In some programs, the length of placement is negotiated and written into the contract between the youth, the parent and the program.

2. Extensions of the Placement

Some programs allow for extensions of placement after a conference is held to determine if it will serve any purpose for the youth or the youth's family; and provided the host family is willing to accept the child for a continued stay.

3. Return to a Host Home

In most programs, a youngster is limited to one placement in a host home. Experience has shown that youngsters will create a crisis in order to get back into a host home. Subsequent stays are also contrary to the philosophy of most programs which are designed primarily to serve children who are not chronically in need of alternatives to their own families.

4. Transfers Between Homes

Placement in host homes is generally of a brief enough duration that this problem does not arise. Decisions can be made on an individual basis after staff examine the circumstances surrounding this request.

5. Contact with the Natural Family

In many instances, the agreement between the agency and the host family states that the name and address of the host home will remain confidential and that contact between the youth and the parents will occur through the counselor. In other programs, decisions concerning how communication will be handled and whether the host family's telephone number will be given to the parent are made on an individual basis. Inevitably, the parent sometimes learns the number or address contrary to agency decision. Depending on circumstances, e.g., if the parent is alleged abusive or threatens the host family, it might become necessary to move the youngster to another type of program which provides greater safety.

6. Contact with Friends

Youngsters may be asked not to have any contact with friends while in the host home, or not to give the host family's phone number to friends. Phone calls may be permitted at the discretion of the family as long as the privilege is not abused. The initial agreement with a youngster should include this information.

7. School Attendance

School or work attendance is often required under the contract the youth makes with the program. In fact, depending on the age of the youth, participation in a school program may be legally required. In these cases, arrangements must be made for transporting those youngsters who are temporarily living a distance from their schools. Schools near the host family may be willing to register youngsters for short periods of time, or tutors may be obtained. In many instances, youngsters can remain close to their schools. Unless attendance at his/her own school poses a danger to the youth, attempts are generally made to place the youth in a home in his/her school district.

8. Provision of Transportation

The agency generally provides transportation to the host home. Often the initial contract with the host family will outline their responsibility with regard to transporting the "guest" to school and to appointments. In other cases, staff or volunteers may be entirely responsible for the child's transportation.

9. Discipline

Obviously, any form of corporal punishment is prohibited by all programs. In some states, allowable disciplinary measures are specifically regulated. The agency, then, must establish policies which will conform to such state regulations. In any event, clear cut guidelines for host families will be useful and will help avoid any inadvertent excess in discipline.

10. Host Home House Rules

Rules to be followed by a youth in the host home can be set by the agency or they can be set by each host family under supervision of the agency. Agency-wide rules, written in a handbook, offer a host family concrete and immediate back-up when problems occur and the guest questions a host parent's decision. The rules may include the youth's responsibilities around the host home, curfews/smoking privileges, what contact is allowed with friends, etc. Rules maintained in existing programs vary: in some programs the youngster's life while in the host home is regulated to a great extent; in other programs, the structure is looser.

11. Curfew

This depends on several factors, particularly the age of the youth. In some programs, youngsters are expected to remain at the host home (except during school or work hours) for the duration of placement. In others, curfew is discussed when the youngster signs the placement agreement or is mutually agree upon by the youngster, the host parent and the counselor.

12. Allowances

Unless the host home is paid or reimbursed for this expense, youngsters should not expect an allowance. If a youth needs money for lunch or transportation, the agency provides it directly to the youth. The agency, then, may expect parents who can afford it, to reimburse them for these expenses.

13. Medical Care and Emergencies

In some programs, parents are responsible for all medical costs, although the child will be brought to the doctor by the host family or agency staff. In other programs, arrangements may be worked out with local hospitals or clinics.

2. **A written summary by the worker describing the course of placement in the host home and assessing the success of intervention** (see Appendix K).
3. **A debriefing session with the host family.** This is often built into the placement process to provide the host family and agency staff a formalized opportunity to discuss the placement. The purpose is two-fold: providing the agency with potentially valuable information on the youth and his/her family, and providing the host family with encouragement and support.
4. **A follow-up interview with the parent or a questionnaire for the parent to complete.** This is another source of feedback on the success of the host home intervention. Questions might focus on: whether the parents felt the placement helpful to them and to the family; whether the agency maintained objectivity in working with them, their child, and the host family; and, whether they are satisfied with the outcome.

L. Records

Records should be maintained on each host family and on each youth in placement. Through case records, the counselors and the agency can be held accountable to their clients, to the agency, and to the standards of the social service community. Records are evidence that work is being done with each youth and family, and they are useful in the ongoing assessment of each counselor's work.¹⁴ Counselors can use case recordings to think through the goals for each client and review the direction of their work. Additionally, the records allow the agency to look at results of the work with each family and how they have been accomplished.¹⁴

Included in the host family records should be the initial application, the home study, the host home contract, a record of the youngsters who have stayed in the home, and an evaluation of each placement experience.

Records on the youth include the intake and assessment form(s), the contract with the youth and his/her family, notes on each contact with and on behalf of the youth and family, any documents concerning the youth or previous evaluations, the discharge plan and a final evaluation of the placement.

M. Budgeting

In order to give planners an idea of the expenses entailed in a volunteer program, a projected budget has been developed based on New York City salaries and costs. The budget has been calculated for a program which employs three counselors with bachelor's degrees as well as a full-time director with a master's degree and administrative and supervisory experience. The director's responsibilities would include supervision of all staff, budgeting, training and recruiting host homes and other administrative functions. Such a program would have 15 youth in host homes at any one time (a case load of 5 per counselor; 390 each year) with, ideally, 45 host families available. Review this budget keeping in mind that the cost of living varies from area to area and that a smaller or larger number of clients will affect the costs.

BUDGET CHART

	First Year
Director/Coordinator	\$ 27,000
Counselor (3 × \$18,000).....	54,000
Secretary/Administrative Assistant.....	16,000
Total Salaries.....	\$ 97,000
Fringe Benefits (20% of total salaries).....	19,400
Total Personnel Services	\$116,400
<hr/>	
Rent—5 Offices Plus a Conference Room	\$ 15,000
Approximately 1,000 sq. ft. @ \$15/sq. ft. (utilities included)	
Furniture and Equipment*	7,000
(Desks, chairs, side chairs, typewriter, calculator, conference table, file cabinets)	
Office Supplies (stationery, pens, tape).....	1,500
Staff Transportation	2,000
Telephone.....	2,400
Training Materials/Publications	1,000
Petty Cash (client travel, meals, emergency money, clothes).....	10,000
Office Maintenance (service contracts, postage, copying).....	5,000
Insurance**	4,000
Consultants @ \$60/hr. (2 hrs. per week)	6,240
Total Other than Personal Services (OTPS)	\$ 54,140
TOTAL	\$170,540

* One-time expense

** This cost will vary a great deal depending on location and extent of your coverage.

2. Why do you think kids run away?

3. What are your attitudes towards drug use among teenagers and adults?

4. Why do you think parents abuse their children?

5. Why do you think kids become rebellious? How do you respond to a kid who is behaving in a rebellious way?

PLEASE MAIL TO: INTERFACE COMMUNITY
P.O. BOX 947
1738G NEWBURY ROAD
NEWBURY PARK, CA. 91320
498-6643, 529-0975, 647-7855

APPENDICES

A-K

Program staff should have signed releases from parents or guardians authorizing treatment for their child in the event emergency treatment is necessary. Usually, copies of the release are given to the host family. Host families are also given emergency numbers in their area and are instructed to secure the needed help and then to contact the agency. At intake, the program should ask about special medical conditions or allergies which would affect the emergency care.

At times, youngsters will need to take prescription medication and over-the-counter medication (e.g., aspirin, Pepto Bismol). A policy for distribution should be established and host families may be asked to record, on a form prepared by the agency, each time medication is given to the youth while in placement. At times, only prescription medication is logged in this manner. This provides protection for the youth, the host family and the agency.

14. Clothing

The host family is generally not responsible for providing their guest with clothing. Often the youth's family will be asked to provide the needed clothing. Donations or funds for clothing should be sought in instances where the family cannot be or is not contacted.

15. Property

When a youth enters a host home program, a signed inventory should be prepared of what the youth brings with him/her (including clothing, personal items, i.e., jewelry, radios, etc., and money). This will help deter allegations of theft by the youth in the host home.

16. Religious Observance

In programs where government funding is involved, children can neither be required to attend nor prevented from attending religious services if they so desire. Arrangements should be made by agency staff for youngsters to attend the religious services of their choice (i.e., providing transportation).

17. Participation in Host Family Trips

Counselors may want youngsters available for counseling each day during placement. Host family trips would then be discouraged while a youth is residing in the home. In other instances, arrangements can be made for a "guest" to accompany the family on a trip. At times, parental approval must be sought before a trip is approved by the agency.

18. Leaving Youngsters Alone in a Host Home

Most often, host families are discouraged from leaving the youngsters home alone. Some youth require continuous supervision; others are bound by their host home contract to accept continuous supervision. In other programs, depending on the particular youth involved, he/she may be left home alone and may even be permitted to babysit as long as this is not perceived as compensation for the placement and if it is mutually agreed on by the youth and the host family.

19. Reporting Problems or Absence Without Leave (AWOL)

Host families should be encouraged to contact staff as a problem begins to surface. An acting out or AWOL incident may be prevented by this kind of immediate intervention. When a youth does run away from a host home, the agency should be notified as soon as possible. In turn, they will need to notify the parents and other authorities. This will depend on state regulations, the agreement with the youth, and the youth's status with the state agencies. Unless the youth is exhibiting suicidal behavior, the host family should not attempt to physically restrain a youngster from leaving. Agency policies should delineate a procedure to follow in the event of such behavior.

20. Removal from Host Home by a Parent or Other

Unless a youth's parent has been accused of abusive behavior, the parent has the right to remove his/her child from the host home. The agency should be notified immediately and agency policy may include a call to the state or local police in those situations where an abusive parent attempts to remove the youth. No person other than a parent should remove the youth from the host family.

K. Discharge and Aftercare

During the course of placement, plans are developed by the counselor, the youngster and youngster's family for the post-discharge period. Aftercare services help insure that the plans are followed and readjusted when necessary. With continuing assistance readily available, future family crises may be prevented or de-escalated prior to another serious incident. Some programs provide their own after-care services, while others, which do not have the capacity to provide them, rely heavily on community resources. The development of relationships with all types of services (e.g., mental health, vocational, educational, health, social services, etc.) facilitates referrals both for those youngsters who return home and for those who do not.

In those circumstances where the youth is not reunited with his/her family or returns home to a precarious situation, good relationships with an array of community agencies will aid in the placement by the host homes program of the youngster into a long-term living arrangement, e.g., foster home, group home, or independent living. Should a return to home go awry, these same agencies would be resources for the youth.

Leaving the host home may be a difficult process for the youngster and the host family. At times, strong attachments develop and neither wants to give up this newly found relationship. For the youth, the host home environment may be more comfortable, in many ways, than the environment at home. Host homes program staff must be prepared to help the youth and the host family understand their feelings and remember the purpose of the placement.

Contact may be encouraged between the host family and youngster after the youth returns home or is placed in a long-term setting. The family, if they are willing, can provide a worthwhile emotional support for the youth even though replacement with the family is generally not available. Continued contact between the host home and child may also be seen as an issue for discussion and may be encouraged or discouraged as part of a discharge plan.

Programs often build into the discharge process a post-placement review. This can include:

1. **A questionnaire for the youngster to fill out.** In this way, the program can gather feedback on a host home and on the success of the crisis intervention effort. Questions such as the following might be included:

How many days were you in placement?
Was the home clean?
Did you get enough to eat?
Did the family treat you fairly?
Did you feel that they cared about you?
Did you have enough privacy?
Was there someone you could talk to when you felt upset?
Did you feel safe there?
What chores did you have to do?
How many times did you speak to your counselor?
Did you feel your counselor cared about you?
What is the plan after you leave the host home?
Are you satisfied with it?
If not, what would you have liked?

Conclusion

The needs of youth in crisis are diverse and a number of models exist for the provision of services to this population. The host homes model is one model of temporary, emergency care which should be considered when developing new or additional crisis services for youth. The model is particularly applicable to those youngsters without prior involvement with the traditional child care system or the court system and without serious behavioral problems. It is designed for those who are in need of shelter away from home either shortly after a runaway incident or to prevent a serious incident at home. The family setting of a host home allows for the diversion of youngsters from institutional group care during periods of crisis when they are particularly vulnerable to the influences of "streetwise" youth.

In some cases, host homes will be the model of choice. In other instances, the number of homeless, runaway and youth in need of temporary shelter is not large enough to support the development of a group facility. Likewise, in areas where limited funding is available for program development and operation, where zoning is restrictive or where the community will not accept a facility, host homes may be a feasible program to operate.

The basic components of host homes programs have been outlined for those interested in exploring or developing this model. It is our hope that this document will provide a framework within which planners and administrators can develop policies and procedures which best meet the specific needs of the youth in their communities.

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APPENDIX A

SAMPLE PRELIMINARY APPLICATIONS

Model #7

"Dear Potential Cool Home Family"

Interface Community
Newbury Park, Calif.

Since 1974 Interface Community has placed over 450 youths in Cool Homes throughout Ventura County. In the first 3 months of 1977 we placed over 100 youths. Presently, we have approximately 30 licensed Cool Homes, but a strong need still exists for more good options for kids. As a Cool Home, you would work with the Interface office in determining the kinds of kids you feel you can handle and the frequency of placements you would like. The Cool Home program provides placement for a maximum of 30 days; however, the average placement is 4-5 days.

We have included in this packet a number of items that we feel will give you a brief overview of the program. If you have any questions regarding this material or areas not covered, please call the Interface Office and ask for your area coordinator. If you have made the decision to proceed with becoming a Cool Home the steps would be as follows:

1. Fill out the preliminary application and mail it to the Interface Office.
2. The area coordinator will then contact you to set up a group interview time and introduction to the licensing process.
3. Completion of the licensing packet. This is to be turned into Interface after which we submit it to the county. The entire licensing process takes approximately 2-3 months.
4. Following our receipt of the licensing packet, you will be requested to attend a 3-hour orientation/training session.
5. The final step is an in-home meeting with your area coordinator to fill out your family's placement sheet looking at the kind of placement you want, the frequency, family rules, etc.

We look forward to meeting you and welcome the opportunity to work with you in this most exciting and challenging area of community involvement.

INTERFACE COMMUNITY COOL HOME APPLICATION

Family Name: _____

Home Address: _____

City: _____ Zip Code: _____

Telephone: (Day) _____ (Evening) _____

Persons Living in Home: _____
(Names, Ages & Relationship) _____

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

PLEASE NOTE ANY EXPERIENCES (COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT OR WORKING WITH YOUTH) THAT YOU FEEL WILL BE HELPFUL TO YOUR FAMILY IN BEING A COOL HOME.

WHY WOULD YOUR FAMILY LIKE TO BE A COOL HOME?

WHAT, IF ANY, RESERVATIONS DO YOU HAVE ABOUT BECOMING A COOL HOME FAMILY?

1. How can your family help a runaway or troubled youth?

APPENDIX A (Continued)

THE BRIDGE—YOUTH SERVICES CENTER, WILKES BARRE, PENNSYLVANIA

APPLICATION FOR RUNAWAY EMERGENCY SHELTER HOME CARE

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____ Phone _____

Age _____ Marital Status _____ Occupation _____

Place of Employment _____ Business Phone _____

OTHER ADULTS IN HOUSEHOLD

1. Name _____ Age _____

Relationship to you _____ Occupation _____

Place of Employment _____ Business Phone _____

Name _____ Age _____

Relationship to you _____ Occupation _____

Place of Employment _____ Business Phone _____

Name _____ Age _____

Relationship to you _____ Occupation _____

Place of Employment _____ Business Phone _____

2. Names, ages, and sex of children (check if living at your home)

NAME	AGES	LIVING AT HOME?
_____	_____	Yes _____ No _____
_____	_____	Yes _____ No _____
_____	_____	Yes _____ No _____
_____	_____	Yes _____ No _____
_____	_____	Yes _____ No _____
_____	_____	Yes _____ No _____

3. Church or Synagogue Affiliation: _____

4. Type of house in which you live?

Single Dwelling _____ Apartment _____ Owned _____

Duplex _____ Other _____ Rented _____

Size of home:

Number of bedrooms _____ Number of Bathrooms _____

5. Will the runaway have a private room? _____

6. Do you have homeowner's or tenant's insurance? _____

7. Work Schedule: Is an adult present in the household days and nights? _____

8. Can you accept a runaway anytime day or night? _____

9. Can you provide transportation for the runaway in an emergency? _____

10. Describe any serious physical or psychiatric illnesses in the family in the past 5 years.

11. What is the reaction of other residents of the household to providing shelter home care for runaways? _____

12. What experiences have you had working with young people? _____

13. Are there any types of runaways you would not accept? _____

14. Sex and ages of runaways appropriate for placement in your home. _____

15. Why do you want to provide a home for a runaway? _____

REFERENCES

Names, addresses, and telephone numbers of four references including your supervisor at work. Please do not include the names of any relatives.

1. Name _____ Address _____
Phone No. _____ Occupation _____
2. Name _____ Address _____
Phone No. _____ Occupation _____
3. Name _____ Address _____
Phone No. _____ Occupation _____
4. Name _____ Address _____
Phone No. _____ Occupation _____

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE FORMATS FOR HOST HOME ASSESSMENTS

THE YOUTH IN CRISIS PROJECT
THE COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
BRIDGEPORT, CONNECTICUT

PROCEDURE FOR SELECTION OF HOST HOMES

1. Most prospective Host Home families come via church-related organizations and community service organizations but not exclusively.
2. An appointment is made for staff person to visit entire family at their home. Program materials are mailed before visit for family's perusal.
3. Staff person spends 1-2 hours with the family to:
 - a. Fully explain project.
 1. Type of children involved
 2. How they come to project
 3. What must happened before, during and after placement
 4. Expectations of Host Family
 5. Definition of everyone's role in the process.
 - b. To get a feel for the family.
 1. Why they are interested in the project
 2. How they feel about temporary care
 3. What their involvement means to them
 4. What are their family interests/activities
 5. To see how they relate to the staff and each other.
 - c. Leave Host Home application with family. In the application, the family defines its availability to the program (i.e., age, sex, race, in school, out of school, etc. of child they would feel most comfortable being involved with). If it is completed and sent to the Council of Churches, the family then either waits for the Host Home orientation or if the family wishes, be placed on the ready list.
4. Once 5-10 new families have sent in their applications, there will be an evening 2-3 hour orientation which includes:
 - a. Program summary (showing relationship of Host Home to total program)
 - b. Become familiar with staff
 - c. What to do in emergencies (people and phone numbers to call)
 - d. Legal Questions
 1. Who is responsible for medical expenses incurred?
 2. Do parents of youth know where the host home is?
 3. What does host family's homeowner's insurance cover?
 - e. Transportation needs of youth (to school, counseling sessions, etc.)
 - f. One or two "experienced" Host Families present to share experiences and answer questions.

APPENDIX B (Continued)

EMERGENCY YOUTH HOUSING PROJECT FAMILY EVALUATION

I. Identifying Data

A. Name _____

B. Address _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ Marital Status _____

C. Directions to home _____

II. Physical Description of Home

A. Rent _____ Own _____ How long in home _____

B. Home Owners Insurance _____ Name _____

C. Number of bedrooms _____ Number of bathrooms _____

D. Is there a separate available bedroom? _____

E. Quality of housekeeping, state of repair (interior & exterior).

III. Description of Neighborhood

A. Character: Maintenance level, socio-economic & ethnic factors

B. Proximity to schools, employment, transportation, shopping, recreation, places of worship

IV. Family Composition _____

Interview all adult and teenage children. Solicit specific feelings and reactions regarding proposed placement and record in Section V (A).

A. General Data

Father

Mother

1. Physical Appearance _____

& Medical condition _____

2. Educational background _____

3. Place of employment _____

Position _____

Days & Hours of Work _____

How Long Employed _____

4. Recreational Interests _____

5. Special Skills _____

and Hobbies _____

B. Personality characteristics—brief assessment of observable personality characteristics and behaviors.

Father _____

Mother _____

Other (children, boarders, etc., in home) _____

C. Family and interpersonal relationships

1. Interfamily relationships—degree of cohesion, interdependence.

Describe husband-wife relationship with respect to dominant member, role of respective spouse, relationship to children, etc.

2. Intra-family relationships—quality of relationships to community (group involvements and organizational affiliations)

V. Resident Care and Supervision

A. How did family become acquainted with the agency and why did they volunteer (motivational both as expressed by applicant and evaluated by interviewer) _____

B. Has family previously had children other than their own living with them?

_____ If yes, explain. _____

What about this experience did you enjoy the most? _____

The least? _____

What, if any, has been their experience with troubled adolescents? _____

What specifically does family propose as to the role and function of resident (role within family, activities in and outside home) _____

Define how volunteer family would handle a situation where youth was not following home regulations. _____

What, if any, would be some other possible projected problems involved with participation in the program? _____

Specifically, what is attitude towards youth's natural family? _____

Resident preferences in relationship to sex, age, ethnic, religious, and personality characteristics (aggressive, shy, etc.). _____

Maximum number of youth boarded at one time: _____

Willingness and ability to transport residents for medical, dental, clothing, religious services and other needs. _____

Willingness to cooperate with staff regarding caseworker visitations. _____

What do you think are the main responsibilities of the youth worker? _____

Three references (name, address and telephone). Date contacted by the agency.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Has family ever applied for certification to provide temporary care for children?

If yes, explain. _____

VI. Family physician (name, address and telephone number)

Has physician been contacted and/or have arrangements been made for the primary care taker to receive a physician exam before household can be certified?

VII. Final impressions and recommendations.

A. General and specific impressions (positive and negative) of family applying for certification.

B. General and specific impressions regarding inspection of the home.

C. Dates of home visits _____ / _____
(1) (2)

VIII. Application accepted or rejected _____

DATE

PROJECT DIRECTOR

APPENDIX B (Continued)

COUNTY OF BERGEN
DEPARTMENT OF RESIDENTIAL AND COMMUNITY YOUTH SERVICES
CRISIS INTERVENTION SERVICE, HACKENSACK, N.J.

THE HOST FAMILY INTERVIEW

GUIDELINE

Below is a simple guideline to follow when screening prospective Host Families.

Request that all members of the family be present at the screening.

Explain the program in detail to the entire family—as informally as possible.

Gather relevant information concerning the family routine, including such areas as work, extra-curricular activities, daily activities, etc., using the questions below as a guide.

What is the father's occupation?

What time does he arise in the a.m.?

What time does he leave home for work?

What time does he return home from work?

Does he work on weekends?

Does his job take him away from home for any extended periods of time?

What time does the mother arise in the a.m.?

What is her occupation?

If the mother works outside the home, what time does she leave home for work?

What time does she return home from work?

If the mother remains home for most of the day, what is her routine?

What time do the children arise?

What time do they leave home for school?

What time do they return home from school?

Do any of the children return home for lunch?

Specifically, what time is breakfast, lunch, and dinner served on weekdays? On weekends? Does the family eat their meals together? If no, describe.

Are the children involved in any afternoon, evening, or weekend activities? Describe.

Are the parents involved in any afternoon, evening, or weekend activities? Describe.

What are the rules of the house (e.g., curfew, bedtime, chores, etc.)?

Are there any special rules (e.g., no smoking, attend church services on Sunday)?

Does the family routine vary a great deal on weekends? If so, describe.

Describe the living arrangements that would be provided for the youth in placement.

Describe any prior experience the family may have had in housing a youth.

What preference does the family have, if any, regarding the type of youth they would accept in their home.

Present a variety of critical situations that might occur if and when a youth is placed with the family, in order to determine their actions and reactions. Present situations for both the parents and youths of the family to answer.

Report your overall feelings regarding the interview in the summary you write.

Report, in the summary, your recommendations regarding the type of youth to be placed with the family.

Below are some possible topics to expand on regarding typical situations to pose to the Host Family during the interview:

- Curfew issues (establishing times; violations, etc.)
- Inquiries by neighbors about the youth
- Inquiries by the children's friends about the youth
- Establishing chore requirements
- How to handle a youth who won't talk or open up
- How to handle a youth who is visibly upset, either physically or emotionally
- How should the family deal with some of their own problems that may arise in the presence of the youth in placement

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE REQUEST FOR LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

May 21, 1982

Mr. & Mrs. John Apple
999½ S. Garment Ave.
Middletown, PA 99809

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Apple:

Recently Mr. and Mrs. Ronald McDonald, 483 Fork Drive, Middletown, have made application to be considered as emergency shelter home parents in a very special program of this agency which deals with runaway youngsters. They have given your name as a reference in this regard. Emergency shelter home parents must be of high moral character and be able to handle highly emotional youngsters in a crisis situation. This situation will demand persons who are capable of projecting a certain level of stability and harmony along with an ability to relate to youngsters in a non-threatening manner.

We have enclosed a questionnaire which will assist you in making this assessment. Please answer all of the questions. If you are unsure of an answer, respond to the best of your ability. Be assured that your replies will be held in the strictest of confidence. Your prompt return of this form will be greatly appreciated. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Thomas P. Cherry
Assistant Supervisor

How long have you know the applicant?

How well do you know the applicant and in what capacity?

How would you assess the applicant in responding to rapidly changing situations?

What is the general state of health of the applicant?

How reliable is the applicant in accepting responsibility?

How would you assess the applicant's personal ethics?

How well does the applicant get along with children?

Would you feel comfortable having your child or young person close to you living briefly in the applicant's home

If you have any additional information you feel would be helpful to us, fill it in below.

Signature _____

SAMPLE CHILD ABUSE OR MALTREATMENT CLEARANCE FORM

DSS 3370

Attachment A

**STATE CENTRAL REGISTER
CLEARANCE FORM**

Section 424a of the Social Services Law requires that persons applying for employment with child caring responsibilities, applicants to adopt a child or applicants to be foster care parents be cleared with the State Central Registry to determine if they are the subject of an indicated child abuse or maltreatment report.

- Check One**
- I am applying for employment with child caring responsibilities.
 - I am applying to adopt a child.
 - I am applying to be a foster parent. (Foster mother's name and date of birth must be entered on line 1; foster father's name and date must be entered on line 2.)

Please complete the following for yourself, your spouse, your children, and any other persons residing in your home.

	Last Name	First Name	Alias or Other Name (i.e., Maiden Name)	Date of Birth
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				

Please provide your current address and any other addresses at which you have resided in the past ten years.

Current: _____ Dates: _____

Previous: _____ Dates: _____

_____ Dates: _____

_____ Dates: _____

This form is not an application for employment. The content on this form shall not be used by the authorized agency in the determination of an application for employment. It is to be utilized for identification purposes only pursuant to Section 424-a of the Social Services Law. The utilization of this information in a discriminatory manner is contrary to the Human Rights Law.

I understand that the information I have provided will be used to inquire of the New York State Department of Social Services to determine if I (or the co-applicant) has been or is the subject of an indicated child abuse and maltreatment report.

Applicant's Signature

For Official Use Only

Agency/Branch
Code: _____

Date: _____

Person to whom reply should
be addressed: _____

Agency Name: _____

Agency Address: _____

NOTIFICATION OF SECTION 424-a PROCEDURES

Section 424-a of the Social Service Law requires authorized agencies to inquire of the New York State Department of Social Services to determine whether any of the following persons have been or are the subject of an indicated child abuse and maltreatment report: persons applying for a certificate or license to receive, board, or keep a child; persons applying to adopt a child; and persons actively being considered for employment with child caring responsibilities.

The authorized agency shall notify the applicant of the New York State Department of Social Services response.

If the application is denied, the authorized agency shall furnish the applicant with a written statement setting forth its reasons for denial.

If the reasons for such denial include the fact that the applicant is the subject of an indicated child abuse or maltreatment report, such person may request from the New York State Department of Social Services and shall be granted a fair hearing in accordance with the procedures set forth in section twenty-two of the Social Services Law.

Such hearing must be requested within 60 days from the date of denial. The request must be made by writing: Mr. Albert Pozzi, Special Hearings Unit, Bureau of Administrative Procedures, New York State Department of Social Services, 40 North Pearl Street, Albany, New York 12243, (518) 473-4986.

At such hearing the applicant will have the right to be represented by counsel or other representative, to produce witnesses and other evidence on the applicant's behalf, to request the issuance of subpoenas, to cross-examine witnesses testifying against the applicant. All witnesses will be sworn and a verbatim record of the hearing will be made.

APPENDIX E

SAMPLE HOST FAMILY AGREEMENTS

HOST HOME PROGRAM

HOST HOME FAMILY AGREEMENT

I _____ have read the Home Homes Family material and am familiar with the procedures and guidelines so specified by the O.C. 4-H Y.D.T.F. Host Home Program. I hereby agree to allow a screened Host Home youth to remain in my home under the auspices of the program. I understand that I may make reasonable rules for my guest and that I will not be responsible for providing for financial needs. I do agree to be responsible for providing lodging and meals for my guest.

I agree not to hold the O.C. 4-H Y.D.T.F. Host Home Program, its agents or employees, responsible for any damage done to myself, my family or its property and possessions by my guest, whether done intentionally, negligently, or accidentally. I further agree that I do not expect any financial reimbursement for these services I perform.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

Interviewer: _____

(HH #2)

APPENDIX E (Continued)

Model #7

"Cool Home Family Agreement"

Interface Community
Newbury Park, Calif.

It is our desire to become a Cool Home family. We understand that the youngster placed in our home will receive counseling from Interface counselors to try and remedy the problem and reunite the child and his family. The youngster's stay in our home is for a maximum of 30 days. It is our privilege to refuse a placement anytime due to family inconvenience.

We understand that we are to expect the child to abide by our regular household rules. Corporal punishment is not permitted. We will take all questions and problems in connection with the child to the Interface counselor that placed him/her. If we cannot reach the counselor, we will then call the Interface Office and speak with our area program coordinator during office hours, or the troubleshooter on duty when the office is closed.

We further understand that as a Cool Home family we are licensed and insured by the County of Ventura through the Department of Social Welfare.

Finances: We will be paid by Interface at the rate of \$5 per day for all days our home is used as a Cool Home. This payment serves as compensation for transportation, food, incidentals, and the youngster's share of household operations and utilities.

Medical Care: In case of a medical emergency, we are to first call the necessary facilities (hospital, doctor, etc.) and then our Interface counselor. The youngster's parents will be called by the counselor. We also will have a copy of a medical waiver signed by the youngster's natural parents or guardian in our possession as long as the child is in our home. If there is any question about the need for immediate treatment, we will call the Interface counselor first.

Visiting Privileges: The nature of the Cool Home program is one that necessitates immediate and effective counseling. As provided by an Interface counselor, this counseling is given to the youngster and the natural parents or guardian to reunite the family and attempt to remedy the existing problems in the home. Due to these reasons, we understand that an agreement will be made at the time of placement by the counselor, the child, and us concerning visiting rights and the child's mobility in the community.

Trips and Vacations: With short term family and individual counseling taking place during the youngster's stay in our home, we agree not to leave on any trips or vacations as this would deter the counseling relationship.

We understand that for Interface and the Cool Home Family Coordinator to best administer and evaluate this program, it is necessary for them to use the information on the Welfare Department's application.

In signing this agreement, we signify our acceptance of our responsibility as Cool Home parents. We will keep all information which may be given us about the child or his family confidential; we will give any child placed a chance to adjust; and, should we wish that child removed, we will give the Interface counselor reasonable time to make other plans.

We will also keep Interface informed of any changes in our own family. As long as we are licensed and caring for children, we will endeavor to respect this agreement.

Date: _____

Cool Home Parent: _____

Cool Home Parent: _____

APPENDIX F

SAMPLE HOST HOMES HANDBOOKS

THE BRIDGE—YOUTH SERVICES CENTER, WILKES BARRE, PENNSYLVANIA

GUIDELINES FOR RUNAWAY EMERGENCY SHELTER HOME PARENTS

1. If you or the runaway you are sheltering encounter any problems of any nature, immediately call The Bridge worker. After office hours, a worker can be reached by calling the Help Line.
2. If a medical emergency arises, call a worker and if necessary, take the child directly to the nearest hospital emergency room.
3. Do not administer medication of any kind to a runaway without clearance from a worker.
4. If the runaway decides to leave, do not attempt to physically detain her.
5. Always respect the confidential nature of the placement of a runaway in your home and of any information learned regarding the runaway, her family or life situation.
6. If the runaway wishes to contact her family, urge her to discuss the contact with the worker before placing the call. Calls to family can be made via the National Runaway Switchboard free of charge and without the location of the child being revealed.
7. Meals, necessities for personal hygiene, clothes for sleeping, etc., are the responsibility of the shelter home parents.
8. If the parents of a runaway decide to remove the child from your home, do make any effort to stop them other than urging them to discuss the action with The Bridge worker. If parents do take a child, call the worker immediately.
9. The emergency home parent can best serve the needs of the runaway by providing supervision and guidance appropriate to a substitute parent, by being a good listener, and by instilling trust and confidence in the worker handling the case.

The Bridge
19 North River Street
Wilkes-Barre, Pa.
824-5766

Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday: 9 a.m.-9:00 p.m.
Tuesday, Friday: 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Help Line: 829-1341
National Runaway Switchboard: 1-800-621-4000

APPENDIX F (Continued)

THE YOUTH IN CRISIS PROJECT
THE COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
BRIDGEPORT, CONNECTICUT

HOST HOME GUIDELINES

The guidelines listed below are in reply to many questions that host families have previously raised. As questions occur to you relative to your family's particular situation, don't hesitate to contact a member of the Project Staff.

1. **Who to Call When you Have Questions:** You may contact a member of the Project Staff anytime, day or night. During the night, an answering service will relay the message promptly to the staff person on call.
2. **Phone Number:** 374-9473.
3. **Parental Consent:** The parents of youth (under 16 years of age) will be notified and their consent obtained for their child's admission to the program. The parents will also understand their complete responsibility for any medical and/or financial needs that arise for their child.
4. **Host Home Location:** The name and location of a host home is strictly confidential. This information is not given to the parents of the child.
5. **Host Family's Roles:** Members of the family should not try to be psychiatrists or any other role. Do what you do best . . . BE A FAMILY.
6. **Follow-up Services to the Youth:** Arrangements for Support Team involvement and other supportive services in the community will be initiated on the day of placement (includes arrangements for schooling, etc.).
7. **House Rules of the Host Home:** Your guest will be told he/she must comply with the house rules of the host home. Be sure to explain to your guest any rules or expectations your family considers important for him/her to know (i.e., mealtimes, curfews, bedtime hours, use of telephone). If your guest disregards the agreements that are made, please call the Project Staff.
8. **Avoid Obvious Temptations:** Avoid creating unnecessary temptations by leaving valuables just lying around the house (i.e., car keys, money).
9. **When you Leave the Home:** If you leave the house for a period of time, we suggest that your guest leave also. He/she will be told this before placement. You are not responsible for entertaining your guest except as you desire to do so.
10. **Regular Meals:** The Host Family is expected to provide regular meals for their guest. Host families are *not* expected to provide for their guest's financial needs beyond food and shelter.
11. **Medical Emergencies:** In case of medical emergencies, you may transport your guest to an appropriate medical facility. **BUT, YOU DO NOT HAVE THE RIGHT TO** sign any permission-giving documents for medical treatment. The natural parents of your guest must be notified for their consent. Call the Project Staff and we will do what is necessary.

12. **Drugs and/or Alcohol:** Your guest is told before placement that the holding, dealing, or using of drugs and/or alcohol is strictly forbidden. If any related problems develop, call the Project Staff.
13. **If a Guest Returns:** If a guest returns to your home at a later date, you are *not* expected to house him/her. Please call the Project Staff.
14. **Weekend Trips:** It is fine if you wish to take your guest on a weekend trip with the family. **HOWEVER**, please call the Project Staff and leave information about how and where you can be reached in case of emergency.
15. **Insurance:** Your Homeowners Policy and Automobile Policy are your insurance for accidents occurring in and around the home or in the car while traveling. Your guest has the same status as a next-door neighbor staying at your home.

APPENDIX F (Continued)

Model #1

"Volunteer Family Handbook"

Anchorage, Alaska

Section 1 OVERVIEW OF FAMILY CONNECTION

A Community-Based Agency

Family Connection is a community-based agency designed to meet the immediate needs of runaway youth and their families by utilizing local human resources. Funded as one of fifty national pilot projects, Family Connection provides temporary shelter to runaways through the use of a community network of volunteer homes. The volunteer family is an expansion of the familiar yet vanishing "extended" family of aunts, uncles, and grandparents who used to spell each other during a family crisis. Today, with families sprawled across the country, we must rely more and more on the care and response of concerned community members in a crisis. In addition, Family Connection hopes to reduce dependency upon institutions in resolving local human service problems.

Sources of Funding and Services Provided

Family Connection is a private, non-profit, agency funded through the Federal Office of Youth Development (DHEW) and the State Division of Social Services. The purpose of the services at Family Connection is to provide temporary shelter to runaways as part of an overall treatment plan, to reunite youths with their natural family whenever possible, and to strengthen supportive family relations through affecting parenting and behavioral management skills. By providing shorter-term housing and family counseling, Family Connection is able to assist families who want to learn new ways of working through family issues. At the point of a crisis, a family seems more willing to problem-solve. The Family Connection staff uses this crisis as an opportunity to resolve family problems before they demand the intervention of the police or of the court.

Temporary shelter is available through volunteer homes licensed by the state for use by Family Connection. These homes take young people ages 12 through 17. Placements require parental permission and a commitment to family counseling for a minimum of one session. Volunteer families provide food, shelter, and a supportive environment from one to seven days and are used once a month. All services are free and confidential.

The Volunteer Family Program

The volunteer family is a new approach in the residential care of runaway youth. A network of volunteer homes is an alternative to institutionalizing kids under family stress. This use of volunteer homes gives teenagers the opportunity to remain in their community, to experience positive relationships with other adults, and to avoid the negative experience of being locked up for running away

from a hurtful situation. In addition to offering a stable home life, volunteer families make a substantial financial contribution to the community by relieving the state from spending \$50 a day per youth.

1. Purpose of Youth Placement

The purpose of a youth placement is to give every family member a "cooling off" period an a chance to take a fresh look at the situation precipitating a runaway episode. A youth placement is a mutual decision of the family, youth, and agency based on an agreement to participate in family counseling. A temporary placement is a means of supporting both parents and youth in a time of crisis.

2. Role of Volunteer Family

The volunteer family is an *essential resource* to the parents, teenager, and Family Connection staff. The volunteer home program is the core of our agency's services. Food, shelter, and a supportive environment is offered to a runaway as his/her family struggles through the crisis of adolescence. Following the placement, the adults in the volunteer family are invited to sit as team members in the family conference as resource consultants to the natural parents and staff.

Section 2 BECOMING A VOLUNTEER FAMILY

Welcome to Family Connection

The staff is pleased that you have decided to open your home and share your family life with a teenager experiencing stress in his/her home. Our short-term program is totally dependent upon the willingness and cooperation of folks like you. Without your concern and interest in runaway youth these youth would have no safe place to go—nowhere to turn. We hope that your involvement with Family Connection will be challenging and rewarding. Your participation is encouraged and deeply appreciated.

Recruitment—Why You Were Chosen

Family Connection is interested in couples with children, couples without children, single parents, and single adults. We look for adults who communicate clearly and openly with one another, who are able to set firm and fair boundaries for all children in their household and who can provide adequate consequences to non-acceptable behavior. We select adults and families based on their interest; commitment, and the supportive environment they currently provide for each other and their families.

The Home Visit

The Volunteer Coordinator makes an appointment with interested families to discuss Family Connection, the Volunteer home program, and to answer questions from all family members. The home visit is an opportunity for families to find out about Family Connection, the significance and frequency of runaway episodes nationally and locally, and specific ways to respond to this critical problem. At this time an initial application form is filled out by the adults and returned to the Volunteer Home Coordinator when the licensing study is conducted.

Licensing Study

After a family has participated in a home visit and has taken two to three days to talk among themselves about opening their home, a date is set to do a licensing study. The study is based on state requirements for foster care and approved by the Division of Social Services for use by Family Connection. The study takes approximately 2½ hours and is composed of poignant questions which assist the Volunteer Home Coordinator in looking at the stability of the adult relationship, the parental relationship, discipline of the children, and general physical layout of the house. When the study is completed, it is submitted to the Division for approval with medical release forms from each adult, TB

tine test results from all family members, and three letters of recommendation. If approval is granted, a license is mailed to the Volunteer Family.

Identification Cards

An I.D. card is also issued when the license is issued. This card identifies you as a Volunteer Family and should be signed and carried with you. Use the card in the event you are questioned about unrelated teenagers placed in your home.

Orientation and Training

Following Division approval of the licensing study, each new family participates in an orientation session at Family Connection. This session consists of meeting the staff, reviewing agency policies on family counseling and youth placements, examining the Volunteer Home Handbook, being briefed on the Home Observation Report, and discussing how runaway episodes in families are handled by this agency.

Specific training is provided at all volunteer families in family systems theory, parenting skills and behavioral management in the home. Training sessions vary, usually lasting from two to four weeks. All families will receive an orientation and training prior to a placement. Additional training is scheduled upon request of individual families.

Annual Review

A foster care license is usually approved for one year, with a special three month provisional license granted in emergency situations. This provisional license allows a home to be used immediately. At the end of the year, the families' placement experiences are reviewed and discussed with the Volunteer Home Coordinator. This is a time to focus on what occurred during past placements. At this time the family is also asked if they would like to continue as a volunteer with Family Connection for another year and what changes, training, or support, if any, they need to continue in the program. This annual assessment provides both the volunteer and the agency with means to refine and improve the residential services to runaway youth.

Section 3 PLACEMENT PROCEDURES

Requests for Placement

A request for placement is frequently a result of a family crisis and not predictable. Most of the requests for short-term placements are received through other social service agencies. Occasionally a youth or family will inquire about placement possibilities. A youth placement is available from one to seven days. Seven days is the maximum a youth may use one of our volunteer homes. A family conference is convened before a placement is made to discuss its purpose, the length of days in placement, and the scheduling of a family conference. Placement decisions are made by the Volunteer Home Coordinator in conjunction with the rest of the staff. The staff assists families in identifying alternate living situations if a return home is not possible. However, Family Connection is not *responsible* for arranging an alternate placement.

Requirements for Placement

Parental permission is required for all placements in our volunteer homes. A youth placement is viewed as an essential part of the family counseling plan and not a convenient depository for unwanted or unmanageable teenagers. In addition to parental permission, a family must be willing to participate in family counseling for a minimum of one session.

Selection of Volunteer Home

After a placement request has been approved, licensed families are then called. Placements are based on the availability and last date of use of the volunteer family. Whenever possible, the Volunteer Home Coordinator tries to schedule a placement with as much advance notice as possible. We

do ask, however, that the volunteers be as flexible as possible. Although a volunteer family may be asked to take a placement, they are always free to refuse a request.

Length of Placement

Placements are available from one to seven days. You will be asked to receive a placement once a month. The length of each placement is discussed and decided upon at the initial family conference. The volunteer home's availability may also affect the length of a placement. The agreed upon number of days is made known to the family, the youth, requesting agency, and volunteer home.

Transportation to the Volunteer Home

The Family Connection staff is responsible for taking a runaway to the volunteer home. The volunteer family is asked to bring the youth to Family Connection for a conference during the placement. If you cannot provide this transportation, the staff will fill in as needed.

Home Observation Report

At the end of a youth placement, the volunteer family is asked to fill out a Home Observation Report. This is a brief form with questions about the attitudes and behavior expressed by the youth while living in the home. This report is a resource for the team members working with the family. The volunteer family returns the Home Observation Report to the Volunteer Home Coordinator when the youth is brought to Family Connection for the family conference at the end of placement. All information is confidential and filed with other family records at the agency.

Debriefing and Family Conference

The volunteer family is invited to join the team at the end of the placement to share their experiences. This information increases the family caseworker's understanding of the relationships in the stressed family. In a separate session with the Volunteer Home Coordinator, the volunteer family has the opportunity to discuss all placement activity. These sessions usually occur immediately following termination of the placement.

Section 4 RECEIVING A TEENAGER INTO YOUR HOME

Initial Disposition of Youth

When a youth is placed in your home she/he may express a range of emotions, from withdrawal to open hostility. The youth is probably upset and frightened and uncertain of a strange environment. The way in which your family initially responds to the young person sets the tone for the remainder of his/her stay in your home. It is important that you welcome the youth into your home and continue with your regular family routine as soon as possible. The very routine of your life can provide a youth with the stability he/she needs. When a youth arrives, it is important that basic house rules are established. If these rules are disregarded, contact Family Connection. Your roles as a family should remain basically unchanged. The agency does not expect you to engage in counseling but to listen and support the youth during a difficult period.

Effects on Your Family

A runaway youth placed in your home is under stress but in most cases will not resort to harmful behavior. Every effort is made by staff to carefully screen placement requests and select adolescents suitable for a family setting. However, there are always some risks involved. We suggest you don't tempt kids by leaving valuables, money, checkbooks, savings books, car keys, and fire arms readily available. Call Family Connection if any problems arise in these areas.

A Supportive Environment

The volunteer family is asked to provide food, shelter, and a supportive setting to the youths placed in your homes. This means making sure regular nutritious meals are available, the youth has a separate bed to sleep in, and the adults are understanding while being objective and warm. A youth in

placement should be treated as other family members and need not receive special treatment. Remember, your home was selected because of the existing character of your family.

Section 5 LIVING WITH A TEENAGER IN CRISIS

House Rules

A teenager needs to know what is expected of him/her while living in your family. Therefore, it is a good practice to sit down as soon as possible to discuss the rules of your home. It is important that these rules be followed. In the event a youth pushes beyond the limits established in your family, fair and firm consequences need to be immediately set down for the remainder of his/her stay in your home.

Discipline

Discipline should be handled by the adults in the family, preferably the adult of the same sex as the youth. When disciplining, you need to consider the youth's age, social, intellectual, and emotional maturity. The youth should be aware that he/she is responsible for his/her behavior and appropriate consequences will follow non-acceptable behavior. Denial of meals, physical punishment, and verbal abuse are not recommended at any time. The Volunteer Home Coordinator is available on a 24-hour basis during a placement if you have any questions regarding appropriate disciplinary action to take.

Transportation

The staff is responsible for taking a youth to a placement. Individual transportation needs are discussed with the volunteer family at the time of the licensing study and at each placement. If no public, school, or volunteer transportation is accessible, the staff will transport the youth to school and family conference.

Supervision

Although a youth does not require constant supervision, it is recommended that an adult be in the home and on the premises while a youth is in placement, whenever possible. In most cases, the youth will be attending his/her regular school and will be home in the afternoon and evening.

Siding or Supporting Teenagers

Frequently a youth placed in your home will be angry and resentful of his/her parents. He/she may spend a lot of energy trying to verbalize these feelings. It is important that the volunteer listen and understand the youth's feelings while maintaining a safe distance so as not be caught up in the situation. There is a natural tendency to assume an advocacy position for someone who is hurting. However, the volunteer family needs to remember that they are hearing only one side of the family problem. Siding with the teenage against his/her parents is neither helpful nor supportive. In fact, it is generally disruptive to the functioning of the natural family and it may prevent them from making significant changes while in counseling. The volunteer family is not expected to do counseling with the youth, but offer concern, interest, time and a friendly ear.

Contact with Natural Parents

Visitation arrangements with the family will be made on a case-by-case basis by the staff. The volunteer family will be notified of these arrangements at the time of the placement. Schedule of visitations is a staff responsibility. We also encourage you *not* to have the visitation in your home.

Curfew, Friends, Phone

Special conditions regarding these issues will be discussed at the time of placement and noted on your information sheet. These conditions will most likely vary from youth to youth. Any questions can be directed to the Volunteer Home Coordinator.

Babysitting

Although a youth will frequently be of an age to attend smaller children, he/she is not expected to exchange babysitting services for shelter. If a need arises for care of children, the youth and the family should discuss that need and reach a mutually satisfactory decision.

Allowances

Since stipends are not available for our volunteer families, they are not financially responsible for a youth placed in their home. If the teenager arrives without adequate finances for school lunches and sundry items, staff should be notified so they can make arrangements with the youth's family. The volunteer home is advised to use their discretion in lending or donating money to a youth in their home.

School

With the exception of illness, suspension, holidays, or summer vacation, a youth is expected to attend his/her regular school while in placement.

Church

Attendance at the volunteer's family's church is not to be required of the youth while in the home. However, arrangements should be made available for the youth to attend the church of his/her choice should it be so desired.

Trips Out of Town

If your family intends to be out of town for more than a day and you want to take the youth with you, notify the Volunteer Home Coordinator prior to leaving town.

Liability Insurance

Although Family Connection has liability insurance, it does not currently cover our volunteer homes. Family Connection requires parental permission in order to place a youth in one of our homes. The youth's families are required to sign a form which holds the agency and volunteer families harmless in the case of an accident or injury. This form does not prohibit legal action but is intended to seriously discourage any pending legal action. All volunteer families are encouraged to carry tenant-homeowner's insurance. Also, please check to see if your automobile insurance covers uninsured drivers. The director has been actively investigating an insurance plan, however, the feasibility of obtaining insurance in the near future is not very encouraging.

Section 6 EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In all emergency situations, use a basic common sense approach. The volunteer family is primarily responsible for taking the appropriate action in life-threatening situations such as serious illness, accident or drug overdose. Every volunteer family will have the name of the natural family's doctor and should have him/her contacted. The youth should be taken to the nearest hospital in the case of a medical emergency. If a teenager overdoses on any drug, Open Door Clinic or Poison Control can be called for procedural assistance. However, if the youth appears unconscious, call 911 immediately for an ambulance. You should then call the the agency staff person on call, whose number you will have, or the Volunteer Home Coordinator.

For situations such as suspension from school or intervention by police, please inform the staff person on call or the Volunteer Home Coordinator immediately. You are not expected to be responsible for intervening in these situations.

If the youth runs from your home, contact Family Connection. Allow at least four to six hours leeway before calling unless you think the youth may be in some danger. We do not recommend that the volunteer home go in search of the youth.

Section 7 SEPARATION—LEAVING YOUR HOME

Occasionally a strong attachment may develop between the volunteer family and a youth in placement. Under these circumstances, it is understandable that termination of the placement may be difficult. Yet the volunteer family is asked to assist the youth in returning home or in moving to another placement. Continued contact with the youth following a placement should be discussed with the Volunteer Home Coordinator.

Suggested Reading: (These articles and books will be made available to you in your training packet)

Books: *Between Parent and Teenager*, Dr. Haim G. Ginott
 Families, Gerald Patterson
 Children, the Challenge, Rudolph Dreikurs

Articles: "Is Your Family Emotionally Healthy and Happy?" by Charles Matthews
 "What Makes the 'Perfect Child' Go Astray?" by Fredelle Maynard
 "Making of a Delinquent"
 "The Family is the Patient"

APPENDIX G

SAMPLE INTAKE FORM

COUNTY OF BERGEN
DEPARTMENT OF RESIDENTIAL AND COMMUNITY YOUTH SERVICES
CRISIS INTERVENTION SERVICE, HACKENSACK, N.J.

**HOST HOME PROGRAM
SCREENING AND CASE HISTORY FORM**

Initial Contact Date _____ Referred by _____

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Age _____ D.O.B. _____ Sex _____ Race _____

Parent or Legal Guardians	Address	Phone—Home & Work	Relationship
—Mother	_____	_____	_____
—Father	_____	_____	_____
—Guardian	_____	_____	_____

Number of Siblings _____ Relationship _____

School _____ Grade _____ Counselor _____

Other Agencies Involved _____

Signed Complaint? _____ Date _____ Contact with Juvenile Court? _____

Contact with Host Home before? _____ Date _____

Have you run away before? _____ When? _____

Situation Analysis _____

Determination _____

Host Family _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Date & Time Placed _____ Date & Time Returned _____

Analysis of Return _____

Follow Up _____

Directions to Client's Home _____

Directions to Host Home _____

APPENDIX H

SAMPLE PARENT CONSENT FORMS

4-H HOST HOME PROGRAM

PARENT'S CONSENT TO PLACEMENT

The undersigned, parent(s) or guardian(s) of:

_____, age _____ residing at
(guest)

_____ hereby grant permission
(address)

to the 4-H Host Home Program of the Cooperative Extension Service to place my child in an approved private home on a voluntary basis for a period of time generally not to exceed 10 days.

We/I realize that my child will be receiving sustenance, care, supportive guidance and counseling from the Host Homes Program staff and/or other social service agencies in conjunction with this placement.

We/I acknowledge that it may be necessary to obtain pertinent information regarding your child concerning her/his personal, medical and scholastic status and hereby authorize release of said information. This information will be shared, if necessary with Host Home family and other professionals mentioned above to best serve and care for your child.

We/I further state that there is/is not a present or pending juvenile court complaint involving my child.

Dated: _____

(Signature of Parent/Guardian)

(Witness)

(Signature of Parent/Guardian)

I hereby agree to this placement.

(Signature of Child)

APPENDIX H (Continued)

THE YOUTH IN CRISIS PROJECT
THE COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
BRIDGEPORT, CONNECTICUT

PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

Date _____

I, _____ of _____

do hereby state:

1. That I am parent/legal guardian of _____
2. That _____ was born at _____
(youth's name) (place)
on the _____ day of _____, 19____
3. That I as parent/legal guardian of _____ do hereby permit and allow said minor child to reside in temporary housing with the Youth in Crisis Project, sponsored by the Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport.
4. That I understand that my child's admission to this program may be terminated at any time by any party to the arrangement.
5. That I understand that such temporary housing will be terminated earlier as it becomes feasible for my child to return home or to other appropriate housing.
6. That I understand that the Host Home and/or Council of Churches are not and will not be responsible for any acts or commissions, intentional or negligent, or the Host Family, the Council of Churches, its agents or employees.
7. That I further understand that I, as parent/legal guardian, retain full legal responsibility for the child's health and financial needs.
8. That I further understand that I have the right to review any records pertaining to my child and to correct the record, or to file a statement of disagreement regarding information contained in the record.
9. That I further give permission for the Youth in Crisis Project to gather and exchange any and all information pertaining to my child, even if this information is considered confidential by the source, including schools, physicians, hospitals, police records, psychological testing, and any public or private social agencies.
10. That I further authorize the Youth in Crisis Project to obtain emergency medical or hospital treatment for my child.

Signature _____

Dated _____ Witnesses by _____

APPENDIX I

SAMPLE MEDICAL CONSENT FORMS

OCEAN COUNTY HOST HOME PROGRAM
EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT AUTHORIZATION

This authorization covers _____ during his/her participation in the
(Name)
Ocean County Host Home Program. This activity covers the period _____ through _____.
(Date) (Date)
In case of sudden illness or accident to the above named participant requiring immediate treatment
or surgery, and/or while in transit, I authorize the Host Home Program representatives in attendance
to take such action as seems appropriate to protect the health and physical well-being of the partic-
ipant. In the event that I cannot be reached in an EMERGENCY I hereby give permission to the phy-
sician selected by the Host Home Program representatives to hospitalize, secure proper treatment
for, and to order injection, anaesthesia, or surgery for my child as named above.

Signature _____ Date _____
(Parent or Guardian)

Parent or Guardian

Name _____ Address _____

Home Phone _____
(Include Area Code)

Business Phone _____
(Include Area Code)

If not available in an emergency, notify:

Name _____ Address _____

Home Phone _____
(Include Area Code)

Business Phone _____
(Include Area Code)

Hospitalization _____

Medicaid # _____

HEALTH HISTORY: (Check—giving approximate dates)

Allergies

Diseases

Ear Infections _____
Rheumatic Fever _____
Convulsions _____
Diabetes _____
Behavior _____
Other _____

Hay Fever _____
Ivy Poisoning, etc. _____
Bee Stings, etc. _____
Penicillin _____
Other Drugs _____
Other _____

Chicken Pox _____
Measles _____
German Measles _____
Mumps _____
Asthma _____
Other _____

Operations or Serious Injuries (Dates) _____

Chronic or Recurring Illness _____

Other Diseases or Details of Above _____

Should activities be restricted? _____

*Suggestions from Parents _____

Are you on any medication? _____

Have you tried alcohol or drugs? _____

To what extent? Alcohol: frequently / infrequently

Drugs: Type _____ frequently / infrequently

IMMUNIZATION HISTORY:

Required immunizations must be determined locally. This is a record of dates of basic immunizations and most recent booster doses.

DTP Series _____ booster _____ Tetanus Booster _____

Polio OPV (Sabin) _____ booster _____ Typhoid _____

Measles Vaccine (live) _____ Tuberculin _____

German Measles (Rubella) _____ Mumps Vaccine (live) _____

Smallpox _____ Other _____

*All Shots—Up to date _____

APPENDIX J

SAMPLE YOUTH CONSENT FORM

4-H HOST HOME PROGRAM

CLIENT AND PARENT GUIDELINES FOR HOST HOME PLACEMENT

Please read and be sure the following terms are understood and agreed to before host home placement.

For the Client:

1. Your placement lasts a maximum of 10 days. The Host Home Family have offered you a good place to live, please respect their offer.
2. If you are under the age of 16 or still enrolled in school, you must attend.
3. The counselors will have frequent contact with the Host family, you and your parents to reclarify the purpose of the placement.
4. You may not give out the host home address or phone number. There is to be no contact with family or friends without your counselor's approval and knowledge.
5. You are expected to abide by the family's house rules. Smoking, limited use of the phone, and bedtime are subject to the approval of your host home parents. You may not go out unless accompanied by a family member.
6. You (pending parent approval) or your parents can terminate the host home placement at any time. Please contact your host home counselor.
7. Right from the beginning be straight about drugs and alcohol. No holding, using, or dealing in any host home. Breaking this rule means that housing will terminate immediately. You will be asked to leave.
8. You agree to attend a teenage support group for four to six weeks (further attendance optional) and to attend any additional counseling deemed necessary.

For the Parent(s):

1. Agree to attend a parent support group for four to six weeks (further attendance optional).
2. Agree to provide transportation for your child to attend his/her group.
3. Agree to no involvement with other counseling, support, service, or parenting services and/or organizations while utilizing Host Home services (four to six week minimum) without the expressed consent of 4-H Host Home Program.

Parents _____

_____ Counselor

Signed _____

Client _____

THE YOUTH IN CRISIS PROJECT
THE COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
BRIDGEPORT, CONNECTICUT

GUEST CONSENT FORM

Date _____

I. _____, of _____

do hereby state:

1. That I was born at _____ on the _____ day of _____ (Place), 19____, and that I am _____ years of age.
2. That I hereby request voluntarily to be admitted to temporary housing with the Youth In Crisis Project, sponsored by the Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport.
3. That I understand that my admission to this program may be terminated at any time by any party to the arrangement.
4. That I will make every effort to participate and cooperate with counseling and supportive services arranged for me by the Council of Churches.
5. That I understand that my stay is temporary, and that it will be terminated as it becomes feasible for me to return home or to other appropriate housing.
6. That I understand I must abide by the rules and regulations of the Youth In Crisis Project.
7. That I will not look to the Host Family or Program Staff for financial assistance.
8. That I agree not to deal, hold, or use any drugs and/or alcohol while in the Program.
9. That I agree not to hold the Host Home, the Council of Churches or their agents and employees responsible for any injury or loss I may suffer while in this program, whether done intentionally or negligently.
10. That I further understand that I have the right to review any records and to correct the record or to file a statement of disagreement regarding information contained in the record.
11. That I further give permission for the Youth In Crisis Project to gather and exchange any and all information even if this information is considered confidential by the source, including schools, physicians, hospitals, police records, psychological testing, and any public or private social agencies.
12. I further authorize the Youth In Crisis Project to obtain for me emergency medical or hospital treatment.
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____

Dated _____ Signed _____

Witnessed by _____

APPENDIX K

SAMPLE DISCHARGE SUMMARY

THE CRISIS INTERVENTION SERVICE OF BERGEN COUNTY

PLACEMENT REPORT

Juvenile's Name _____ Date _____

Home Address _____

Town _____ Age _____

Referring Agency _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Contact _____

Presenting Problem _____

Counseling Agency to be Utilized _____

Appointment Made for _____ at _____ (AM) (PM)

Host Family Utilized _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Monies Supplied to Host Family \$ _____

Placement Terminated _____

Reason for Termination _____

Juvenile Now in Care of _____

Remarks _____

Problems Encountered _____

Caseworker's Signature

Date