

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION



EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE
Changing Lives

When you support Extension, homeless youth learn life skills and connect to resources that empower them to gain employment and housing.



Life skills coordinator talks with two youth participating in the life skills programming at the YMCA Safe Place. This valuable program connects the homeless with steady employment and housing opportunities.

Contact:

Family and Consumer Science
Extension
240 Scovell Hall
115 Huguelet Drive
Lexington, Kentucky 40546-0064
(859)257-3032

<http://fcs-hes.ca.uky.edu/>

Extension Creates Opportunities for Homeless Youth in Louisville, Kentucky

Life skills programming at the YMCA Safe House in Louisville has led to jobs and housing for homeless young adults.



extension.ca.uky.edu

The number of youth served has grown from 4 youth a day to 19 a day since 2015. The YMCA attributed the increase to Extension CYFAR programming which focuses on jobs, housing, locating resources, and job and trade skills.

Life Skills Coordinator

The Homeless Count Census for Louisville, Kentucky, provided by the Coalition for the Homeless, states that between October 1, 2015 and September 30, 2016, there were 443 homeless young adults ages 18 to 24. The same census states that there were 1079 youth under the age of 18 who were homeless during the time period. A partnership between University of Kentucky Extension (UK), Jefferson County Extension, and Louisville YMCA Safe Place, made possible by a Children, Youth, Families At-Risk (CYFAR) grant, is focusing on those homeless youth in Louisville. Through the grant, UK hired a "Life Skills Coordinator," based in the Jefferson County Extension office and the YMCA Safe Place. This Life Skills Coordinator delivers life skills programming to homeless youth ages 12 to 23 in the YMCA Shelter House and Youth Development Center. The life skills programming uses a set curriculum from the University of Missouri called "Tackling the Tough Skills" and supplemented with "Skills to Pay the Bills" from the U.S. Department of Labor. During the same period as the census mentioned above, the YMCA Youth Development Center served 158 young adults age 18 to 22 or approximately 36% of the population. For the younger age demographic, the YMCA Safe Place Shelter House program served 367 youth or approximately 34% of the total number of homeless youth under the age of 18.

In the YMCA Shelter House, youth who are homeless, runaways, or otherwise in need of a temporary safe place to stay are taught life skills as a part of other classes offered by the Shelter House. The Life Skills Coordinator trained employees of the Shelter House to deliver life skills programming using the curricula above. Since 2015, 162 life skills lessons taught to 510 program participants resulted in:

- 26 youth gained employment,
- 13 gained housing,
- 5 enrolled in college,
- 9 currently enrolled in trade schools and working toward a GED,
- 8 received mental health assistance,
- 3 no longer involved in prostitution, and
- 2 obtained Green Cards.

Beyond life skills at the Safe Place, youth experienced a variety of field trips. Youth met with local legislators in Frankfort to learn how topics are brought before the General Assembly. They take field trips to local museums and attractions. United Parcel Service employees taught the youth



Youth at the Youth Development Center have access to computers for job searches, submitting applications and other learning opportunities.



Program participants toured the Ali Center and other downtown Louisville sites. The program provides access and learning opportunities to build life skills.

how to build websites and apps and how to use social media safely.

Partnerships with community organizations are a critical component of the grant. These partnerships allow the youth to meet community leaders and to network with others. In the past year, collaborators have included Kentucky State University, Kentuckiana Works, Wayside Christian Mission, True UP (life skills program for children in foster care system), Skuvault (tech driven e-business management system), Frazier Museum, Louisville Metro Council and Kentucky Educational Television.

The life skills coordinator highlights two young men as examples for what the programming has achieved. One, who has obtained housing, learned to live on his own with budgeting and cooking classes. Another was homeless and jobless when he first came to the Youth Development Center. After life skills programming, he now has a job with YMCA, enrolled in college and maintained housing for a year.

Educational programs of Kentucky Cooperative Extension serve all people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, age, veteran status, or physical or mental disability.