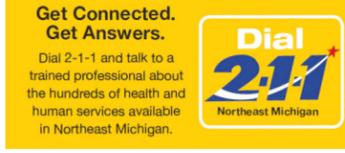


Listening Ear Crisis Center
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1 • Listening Ear Helps Youth Succeed in School

2 • Letter from the Director
 • Annual Report

3 • Homeless Students
 • Generous Supporters

4 • Agency Updates

The mission of Listening Ear is to provide citizens of Michigan with human services and affordable housing that satisfy, support, and promote the dignity and well-being of those in need.

April 2017
 Volume XX, Issue 1

Listening EAR

Listening Ear Helps Youth Succeed in School...

Today, low-income students are four and a half times more likely to drop out of school, than the rate of their peers from high-income families according to the National Center for Education Statistics. Family support, financial stability, affordable housing, engaged schools and a network of community agencies like Listening Ear, may all lead to a child's success at school.



Education reformers often point to the disparity in test scores and grades between the US and other industrialized countries as a sign that differences in educational approaches are the deciding factor. Yet when the data is broken down, it turns out that American children of affluent families do as well as their foreign peers. What drags down the US average is the fact that its poverty rate is higher than in many other wealthy nations, and more firmly entrenched. The gap in SAT scores between wealthy and poor students has grown by 42% in the last two decades.

Listening Ear's 24 hour crisis center, youth services programs and low-income housing apartments all help children succeed in school. In this newsletter we share some stories how we helped children succeed in school.

Agency Updates

Listening Ear is pleased to welcome new personnel and congratulate those who have made advancements —

Welcome:

- Heidi Lundberg, B.S., Case Manager for Transitional Living Program.

Congratulations:

- Child Foster Care successfully passed a Community Mental Health site review.
- Child Foster Care successfully passed a licensing renewal audit.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chairperson: Dr. Kristin Sheridan
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If you wish to have your name removed from the newsletter mailing list, please write: **Executive Director, Listening Ear P.O. Box 800 Mt Pleasant, MI 48804-0800** or, email dschuster@listeningear.com. If you want more information about us, please visit our website at www.listeningear.com or see www.guidestar.org.

INCREDIBLE COMMUNITY

Dear Readers,

Some families and their children face extraordinary challenges that affect their success in school and future employment. Poverty, lack of resources, homelessness and unstable housing, and stress in the home are among the greatest barriers to success.

Listening Ear's services help children succeed in school. For example, our 24 hour Crisis Center helped one limited income family cope with a severe lice infestation. The children were not able to return to school until the home was deloused. Listening Ear helped to coordinate services among local agencies so that they received new bedding, sheet protectors, lice treatment and were able to launder all their clothes and were able to return to school. The Crisis Center staff also helped a mother secure funding so that her 17 year old was able to pay for school expenses needed to graduate. And last, the Crisis Center heard from a single mother and her son who had moved three times in the last two years disrupting her 11 year old son's schooling. The Crisis Center helped the family obtain an affordable two bedroom apartment at one of Listening Ear apartments close to his school and not far from her work.

As shown on Page 3, students affected by homelessness have an especially hard time succeeding in school. These students need to feel safe in stable housing as well as receive emotional support, supplies, transportation, and academic assistance.

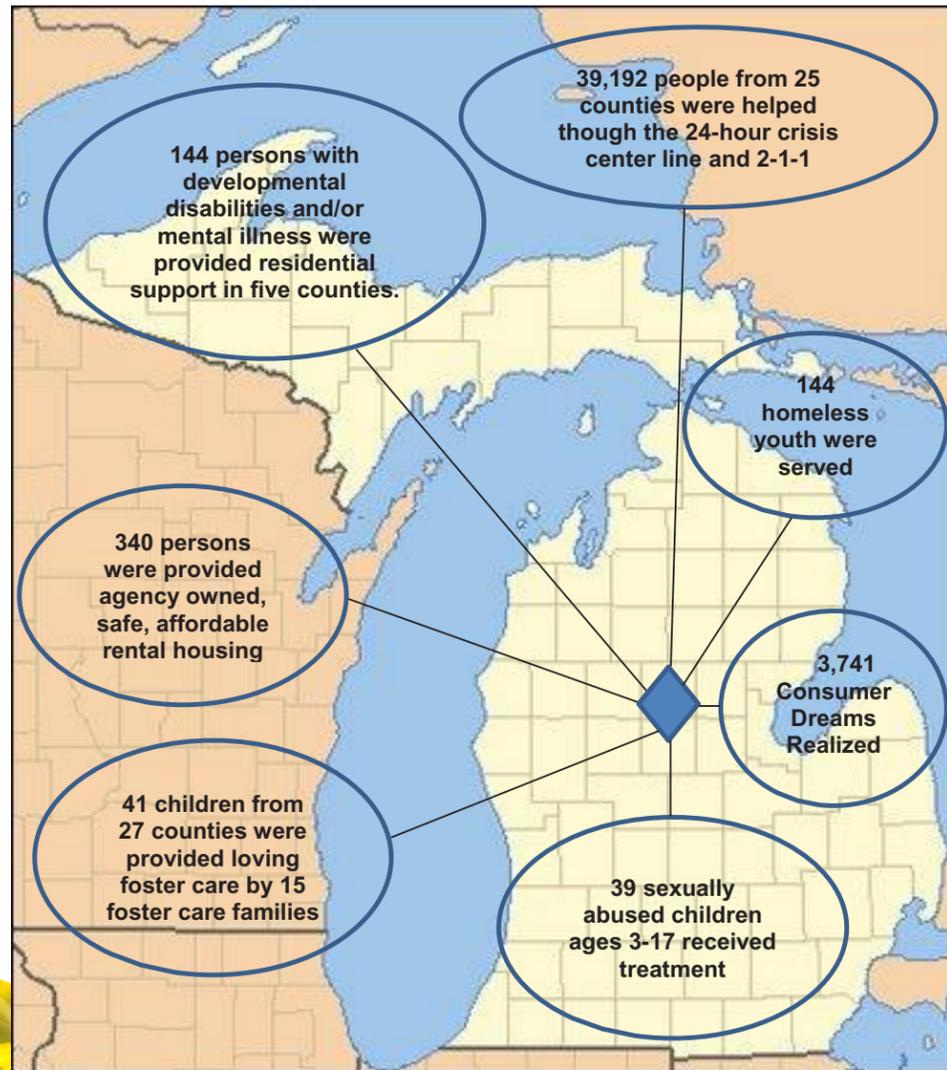
With your support, Listening Ear is able to build a community that is "Always There."

Sincerely,

Donald Schuster, LMSW
Executive Director

ANNUAL REPORT

LAST YEAR 40,000 CHILDREN AND ADULTS FROM 46 MICHIGAN COUNTIES WERE PROVIDED A VARIETY OF SERVICES BY 311 CARING EMPLOYEES



Audited Expenses 2015-2016

Personnel	\$ 7,535,729
Operations	\$ 3,498,407
Depreciation	\$ 167,591
Administration	\$ 746,320
Total Expenses:	\$11,948,047

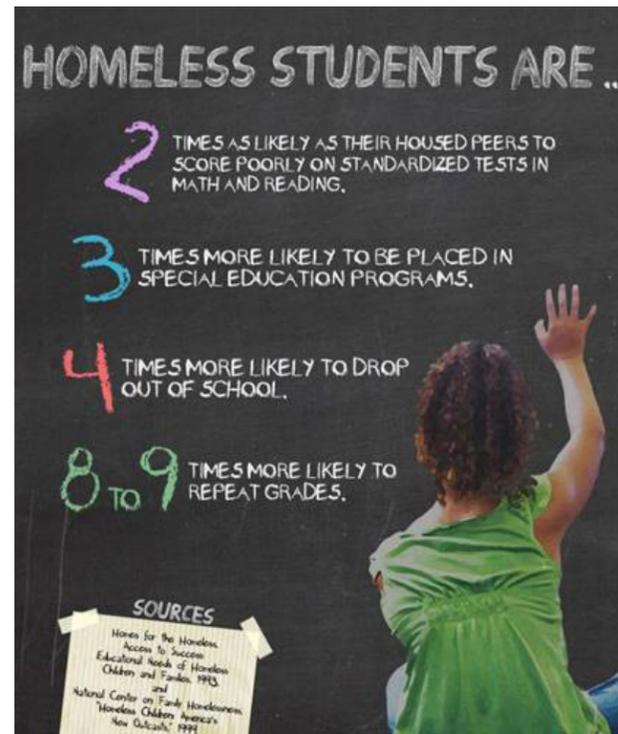
Client Satisfaction-2016

Residential Consumers...	94%
Child Sex Abuse.....	98%
Homeless Youth.....	100%
Foster Youth.....	97%
Crisis Line.....	100%

"Nationally Accredited with the Council for Accreditation since 1998"

Homeless Students Need Extra Help

Homeless students need extra help to complete their education and work toward self-sufficiency. Here are two examples of youth assisted by Listening Ear's Transitional Living Program. The Program offers guidance and support to older, homeless youth between 16 - 21 years old. The staff help youth find stable housing and a range of services for up to 18 months. Youth have the opportunity to achieve independence and develop self-reliance while finishing school, gaining work experience and establishing a bank account.



Jaden was a homeless youth who was kicked out of her aunt's house once she turned 17 years old. She began staying temporarily at a friend's house. Transitional Living Program staff worked with Jaden to help her find stable housing. Jaden received crisis intervention, case management, life skills, counseling, and support services. While receiving services, Jaden graduated from high school and began taking college classes. Working near full-time hours, Jaden was promoted to manager and signed a lease for her own apartment. Overall, Jaden is resilient and focused on a brighter future.

Katy was a 17 year old homeless youth that had recently left her mother's home due to increasing conflict. Her mother's substance abuse often led to frequent fighting. While in Listening Ear's Transitional Living Program, Katy has received crisis intervention, case management, housing, educational support, job placement and life skills education. Katy was able to secure safe stable housing through a host home. She also received help with bus passes to get to school and work. This past spring, Katy graduated from high school and later moved into her own apartment. She is now attending Central Michigan University.

We are thankful for these supporters!

(Gifts made since the last newsletter)...

LISTENING EAR CRISIS CENTER FUND

- Timothy & Miriam Connors
- Mark & Pat Cwiek
- John & Nancy Davis
- Barbara Dunn
- Dykstra & Phyllis Heinze
- Dolores Lawrence
- Mr. & Mrs. John Leonard
- Michael Libbee & Kristin Sheridan in honor of Carolyn Van Cleave and Martha Phillips
- Michael Libbee & Kristin Sheridan
- Robert Long
- Ross & Shelly Rapaport
- Alma & Sherry Wentworth in memory of Erika Bowerman
- Diane Zakala
- Marilyn Zorn

CONSUMERS NEEDS AND DREAMS FUND

- Greg Bator
- Dr. David & Colleen Bremer
- David Johns toward Microenterprise
- Carol Meixner

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE TREATMENT FUND

- Norma Bailey
- John Chiodini
- Mary Ann Freling in memory of Valerie Stephens
- Peter Kelly
- Martha Mater in honor of Michael Libbee & Kristin Sheridan
- Tom & Gisela Moffitt in memory of Valerie Stephens
- Diane Saltarelli in memory of Lori Shively
- Ryan Shannon

GENERAL DONORS & GRANTMAKERS - THANK YOU TO:

- Barnabas Foundation Stewards Fund/ The Paul Buiten Stewards Fund
- C&O Sportswear/MacGregor Family donated sweatshirts for the Transitional Living Program
- Looking Out Foundation giving sexually abused children the opportunity to heal
- Donald Schuster, from the Schuster Family Fund
- Wheatscouts -The Little Wheaties blessing bags for the Transitional Living Program



Foster Parents with a listening ear, an open heart and home are needed!

Call (989) 772-2918

Ask for Listening Ear's Children's Foster Care