



Executive Summary for Impact 100

Mission

Covenant House California (CHC) is dedicated to serving all God’s children, with absolute respect and unconditional love, to help youth experiencing homelessness, and to protect and safeguard all youth in need.” This is our mission, and from the very beginning in 1988 in Hollywood & 1998 in Oakland when a small group of concerned citizens began grassroots outreach program in the streets – handing out food, water, and a brief respite from the rigors of the street to homeless youth – CHC has been a living, breathing collection of people who believe that no young person deserves to be homeless; that every young person in California deserves shelter, food, clothing, education ... and most importantly, to be loved. Our long-term vision is to ensure that no young person in California is homeless! Until then, we will continue to press on and grow until we do not have names on our waiting list for a bed. At the same time, we are committed to diligently working to ensure that each site has access to all the services (excellently operated) that young people need and deserve to thrive independently.

Project

A significant number of homeless kids who come to Covenant House suffer from mental health issues (depression, post-traumatic stress disorder). Suicide attempts are common among homeless youth. While some kids on the streets suffered from mental health issues even before they left home; others develop emotional difficulties due to the daily threats of violence and exploitation that they experience living on the street. In addition, the combination of abusive or neglectful childhoods combined with the hopelessness of street life is often so toxic that many of our kids turned to drug use to self-medicate or escape. Covid-19 pandemic has added a layer of complexity and mental health concerns to an already overwhelming situation that disrupts their stability, progress in school and obtaining employment. Our precious young people are doing the best they can to create a better life for themselves. ***If granted the funding from Impact 100, it would support the first robust mental health program for youth facing homelessness in the East Bay.***

Community Transformation

At CHC, we measure the impact we make in a young person’s life. While we measure many factors and outcomes around our services, we view these domains to be particularly impactful:

- We help over 70% of young people who come into our residential programs with inadequate education complete a GED, high school diploma or enroll in college.
- We help over 80% of youth, in our residential care, find employment.
- We help more than 90% of our young people, in our transitional living programs, move from homelessness into permanent independence.



Youth like Sarah, at 18, had already experienced a part of life that most people are lucky enough to avoid. Sarah had lived on the street since age 16, but she won't talk about how she got there, she simply says "My mother decided to move away and didn't take me with her." While homeless, Sarah had to do whatever she could to survive - which took a toll on her emotionally, mentally and physically, "Being on the streets made me want to do drugs...I could walk all night and not be hungry if I did them. It made it easier to survive and numb the pain." One day, at a local walk-in clinic, a nurse told Sarah about CHC, "I told her what I was going through. She asked if I wanted to finish high school and make my life better – of course I said yes." Within 1 year of residence at CHC, Sarah's story has turned into the life she always dreamed of. She got her GED, and started attending college. She also received therapy to help her process the trauma of her past, while working with her case manager to make a plan for her future. She is currently working full time and opened her first checking account. She laughs loudly, and loves giving hugs. Sarah is thriving. When you ask Sarah about her dreams, she speaks boldly "I want to be a nurse...I'm grateful for that day at the clinic - when my life changed - I want to be that person for someone one day." ***We can't wait to meet more Sarah's who were able to heal, grow and thrive with increased mental health support from CHC, thanks to the investment of Impact 100.***