



SECOND EDITION

**FOR INFORMATION ABOUT REFERRING A YOUTH TO ONE OF OUR PROGRAMS, CONTACT YOUTH CONTINUUM'S CLINICAL DIRECTOR, GORDON NELSON AT (203) 824-4366.**

## Paradigm Shift in PASS Group Homes: Update

As mentioned in our last newsletter, we are progressing in our paradigm shift from a "treatment" to a "teaching model". Staff and youth are actively involved in developing a youth-centered learning culture and integrating program measures



to support this change. To help empower youth, workgroups have been created with youth participation to develop activities and training modules which will foster this culture of learning and support in the following areas: cognitive development, community development and involvement, self governance, leadership and advocacy, educational and vocational abilities, and life skills training. While some implementation steps have already begun in each home, full integration is targeted for early September.

## Youth Stories

### Unique Challenges and Individualized Programming: Graduation, International Travel and College for Forbes House Youth

JC has been a resident at Forbes House for over four years. JC came to the United States as an orphan from China with minimal English language skills and a congenital physical disability. After JC was rejected from his adoptive family, he was referred to Forbes House. During his stay, JC received educational support including individual tutoring and supplemental learning arranged for him at the Sylvan Learning Center. Every summer he attended our Summer Enrichment Program and was introduced to volunteering and new cultural and recreational activities. He has been able to gain job skills through our Work to Learn program and other vocational support through our Educational/Vocational Coaches. Through these efforts, JC is now a graduate from Eli Whitney High School, and will be attending Paier College this coming Fall. In addition, JC has worked very hard to earn enough money to afford a very big trip; he will be traveling to China this Winter for the second time to visit his friends and experience more of his homeland. JC continues to work diligently towards his future as he prepares for college. This summer, JC is continuing his employment at Stop & Shop in New Haven.



### Cultivating Leadership and Creativity

BD has been a resident at Forbes House for the last one and one-half years. At the age of 19, BD had missed a majority of his high school education due to living with and caring for his elderly grandparents. During his stay at Forbes House, BD has utilized the educational resources available through Youth Continuum and his high school to be able to advance from his sophomore year to his senior year. He is on track to graduate next year. BD has also maintained employment at a local public access television channel throughout his placement at Forbes House. BD has also begun to demonstrate leadership skills by creating a youth centered program to reduce bullying; initiating a Youth Continuum singing competition, as well as presenting ideas about program enhancements within Forbes House.

## Forbes/UNO Construction Update!

The ground has been broken and the foundation and walls have been poured. The crews have been busy at work to bring our boys two beautiful new homes.



The first of the two modularly constructed homes is due to arrive in early August 2013. Forbes House will be hosting an Open House celebration in the early fall. Stay tuned for details!

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Visit us at [www.youthcontinuum.org](http://www.youthcontinuum.org) or on Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/youthcontinuum>

## Youth Continuum Hosts Community Gang Workshop and Training

Last month, Youth Continuum brought together over 65 area professionals to better our understanding of how we can meet the needs of youth in our community who are faced with pressures of gang involvement or challenges in resisting gang involvement. This training helped us learn how to detect and understand the complexities of gangs, particularly juvenile gang activity in the New Haven area. Marty Schafman and Scott Hartan, founding members of the Juvenile Parole Gang Treatment Specialist Unit and currently Juvenile Parole Officers for DCF, presented CT and national statistics on juvenile gangs, a variety of identifying factors, and an overview of current activity in the New Haven area. Stefania Agliano, a Child Welfare Trainer and member of the Juvenile Parole Gang Specialist Unit in CT, shared with the participants some background on historical, social, and trauma-related factors that contribute to why youth might join a gang.

The prevalence and prominence of gang-related images in the media was also a focus throughout the workshop. Participants included probation and parole officers, DCF staff, Youth Continuum staff, and other community members. The event was held at the Connecticut Center for Arts and Technology. Youth Continuum would like to thank ConnCat for their hospitality, DCF for sharing their expertise and trainers, and the trainers for their time, wisdom, and commitment to helping our youth. We plan to host other community workshops in the coming year. Stay tuned for details.



Marty Schafman and Scott Hartan present slideshow on Juvenile Gang Involvement for a Youth Continuum workshop.

**Supporting DCF's mission to strengthen families and prepare youth for healthy transitions and self-sufficiency, our PASS homes, Forbes and Uno offer at-risk teenage boys:**

### **Healing & Caring Family Environment**

- High staff to child ratio
- Home-like setting
- Least restrictive environment
- Celebration of diverse cultures
- Family meals
- Individualized treatment plans
- Relational model
- Strength-based
- Focus on insight development

### **Family Reunifications & Healthy Transitions**

- Work closely with families/kin
- Build parenting skills
- Help parents or kin build structure/rules/boundaries
- Connect families to resources
- Non-judgmental, empathetic family work

### **Educational Success**

- Full-time certified teacher and GED Instructor on location
- Expertise in Special Education Needs and Rights
- Long-standing Connections with Area Schools
- Specialized tutoring as needed
- Individualized plan – school alternatives
- Focus on Adolescent Brain Development Framework

### **Promoting Vocational Excellence**

- Job Skills Coach and Employment Specialist
- Collaborative Relationships with Local Employers
- Internships and Summer Employment Opportunities
- Financial Literacy learning

### **Encouraging Independence through Practice of Life Skills**

- Budgeting
- Menu planning
- Cooking and grocery shopping
- Problem-solving
- Household chores
- Managing a bank account
- Preparation for transitions
- Relationship-building skills
- Conflict Resolution

**To inquire about referrals to Forbes House or Uno House, please contact Gordon Nelson at (203) 824-4366 or send an email to [gnelson@youthcontinuum.org](mailto:gnelson@youthcontinuum.org)**

## **Upcoming Training for Staff and Community Save the Date! November 1, 2013**

Youth Continuum, in collaboration with Southern Connecticut State University, is hosting a conference focused on the neuroscience of the adolescent brain and implications for vulnerable youth populations. The conference will present research-based information to a professional audience and will feature nationally renowned speakers; including Frank Kros from the Upside Down Organization; Jason Lang, Coordinator of the CT TF-CBT Learning Collaborative and Project Director for the Connecticut Collaborative on Effective Practices for Trauma (CONCEPT); and Dr. Steve Parese, author and cognitive behavioral specialist. Look for conference registration details soon.