



Step Up
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

YOUNG ADULTS EXPLORE CREATING AN ONLINE SUPPORT COMMUNITY DURING MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

Santa Monica, CA (May 11, 2016)—The members of Daniel's Place, a Santa Monica drop-in center serving transitional aged youth (TAY) know that a diagnosis of a mental health issue is not a destiny.

Life in recovery is possible through the many TAY services provided at Daniel's Place, a supportive TAY community fostering hope, wellness, and recovery. Since 1998, Step Up has continually expanded its TAY services at Daniel's Place to meet the community need, most recently expanding its hours for youth experiencing homelessness to drop-in to 5-7pm Monday through Friday, and 9:30a - 6pm on Saturdays.

Here, youth experiencing homelessness can grab a meal, share community, and be as active or inactive as they desire. Since its launch, Daniel's Place has seen a steady stream of youth experiencing homelessness, many of whom have previously never attended. To date, Daniel's Place has been able further engage and enroll 8 of these individuals into Daniel's Places services.

Although there are many programs for children under the age of 18 years who are experiencing mental health issues, Daniel's Places is one of the few programs in the county offering services specifically targeted to young adults 18 - 28 years of age. According to the 2015 LAHSA Homeless Youth Count, Los Angeles County has over 4000 unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness.

During May is Mental Health Month members of Daniels' Place have formed a focus group to explore the possibility of creating an online community of support available to all young adults who have unaddressed trauma and untreated mental health disorders.

"Years of abuse and neglect compound their mental health distress, often manifested in symptoms of depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, suicidal ideation, substance abuse, and other behavioral health issues.", says Daniel's Place Program Manager Kimberly Low. "These challenges severely compromise the health and well-being of youth experiencing homelessness and jeopardize their efforts to reconnect with society and succeed at education and employment. Without appropriate and compassionate intervention, many youth experiencing homelessness are at high risk of entering into an irreversible cycle of chronic homelessness, total dependence on the system, long-term mental health issues, and permanent aversion to society."



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The young adults of Daniel's Place know it doesn't have to be this way. It is for this reason they are meeting this Saturday during May is Mental Health Month to explore ideas for creating an online support community run by Daniel's Place members for all young adults experiencing a mental health issue wherever they may be. The focus group will be convened by Alex Venegas, volunteer facilitator, this Saturday. For more info on this exciting virtual project, contact: DP@stepuponsecond.org or call (310)392-5855 or visit: <http://www.stepuponsecond.org/blog/2016/05/daniels-place-focus-group-plans-a-virtual-community/>



Alex Venegas, volunteer facilitator

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