



MIRCI

E-Newsletter

Imagine being a teen or young adult trying to do homework or keep a job while living in a car or couch surfing or sharing space in a noisy shelter. Each year, that's the reality for **1 in 10 young adults ages 18-25** and **1 in 30 adolescents ages 13-17** who experience some form of homelessness unaccompanied by a parent or guardian. The trauma causes some to develop severe depression, anxiety or other mental illness, and many face violence and exploitation.

This is how Mirci helps.

Mirci's Youth Program a Path to Independence

Sam's sense of safety collapsed two years ago when his family was evicted from their apartment. He dropped out of high school, and his mom eventually placed him in a community group home. Sam tried to adjust to sharing a bedroom with three others, and he re-enrolled in school, but his anxiety mounted. After an argument with a staff member, the facility asked him to leave. That's when Sam's school social worker reached out to Mirci, and we invited Sam to live in our 18-month transitional home for males.

"I can breathe here," Sam, now 19, said. "The staff seem to care. I have my own bedroom and I really appreciate it because I need some time alone. Mirci helped me get EBT benefits so I can buy food and cook for myself - not very well, but I manage. I'm on schedule to graduate in May, and I'm applying for part-time jobs. I hope to eventually get training to become a commercial truck driver."

Since its 2018 launch, the 10-resident Mirci youth home has served 34 male-identifying youth ages 16-22 who, like Sam,



experienced or were at risk of homelessness. With 24/7 onsite staff and written goals committing residents to 40 productive hours a week, the program offers the stability needed to complete school, become employed and develop skills for independence.

"Think of Maslow's hierarchy of needs," said Mirci Youth Home Manager Rob McClary. "You can see the potential of these young people, but they've been through a lot of trauma. A person's need



for essentials - food, shelter, safety - must be met before we can expect them to make progress on other things like self esteem and accomplishments."

Rob said the Mirci program succeeds in part because it allows residents significant independence, the ability to make choices, and the dignity of being spoken to as young adults rather than children. Residents are asked to work at least part time and pay a modest housing fee, but Mirci returns the money to them at exit to support their next steps.

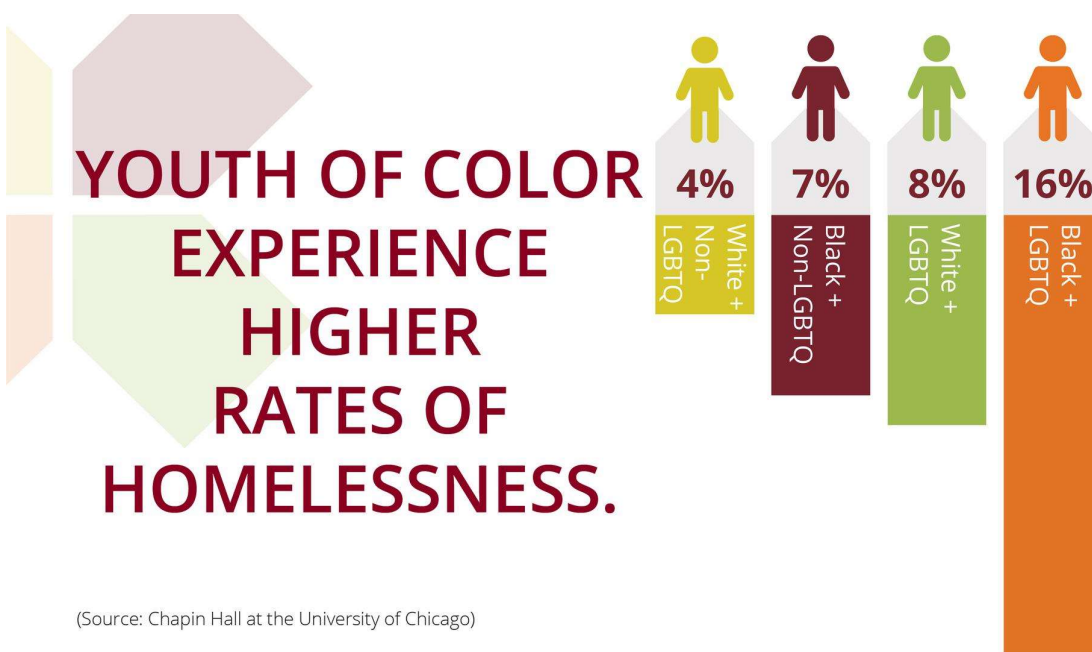
"We don't do things for them that they can do themselves, but we do all we can to help them succeed," Rob said. "For instance, if they are struggling to find a job, we won't get them a job but we will help them revise their resume."

Of youth who were enrolled in the program and have moved on, 9 out of 10 were working when they left, 3 in 4 had completed high school or a GED, and 1 in 5 had enrolled in higher education. Progress reveals itself in other ways, too.

"One of the guys recently came home from his job and instead of heading straight for his room as he normally does, he stopped by my office," Rob said. "He said I've got something to tell you: *I got Employee of the Month!*" That he achieved this - and was excited to share that news with me - told me we are succeeding in building trust and our program is working."



Facts on Youth Homelessness



(Source: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago)

Young adults, ages 18–25, without a high school diploma or GED are

4.5x

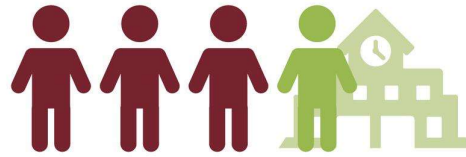


MORE LIKELY TO EXPERIENCE HOMELESSNESS

as their peers who have completed at least a high school level education

(Source: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago)

Among 18- to 22-year-olds reporting homelessness within the past 12 months...



...approximately one in four were enrolled in college.

(Source: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago)



A lack of affordable housing options & supports led to homelessness for youth struggling with family conflict & instability

(Source: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago)

Why Mirci?

River Bluff High School Junior Jennifer Boone recently organized an ambitious supply drive for Mirci clients. She explains what drew her to Mirci and how meaningful it felt to help.



"I am blessed to have a comfortable life and even enjoy luxuries, and anytime I am able to help others who are less fortunate, whether it be a friend or a stranger, I strive to do so. Last fall, at a scholarship workshop at my church, the presenter talked about how each Thanksgiving, she and her family help people who are experiencing homelessness. I was inspired and wanted to do something similar. At the time I was searching for a Key Club community service project. I researched local charities and when I found Mirci, I felt passionately certain it was the right choice for us because not only does it help adults, but also teens - kids our age. I also appreciate its focus on helping people with mental illness.

We decided to do a supply drive, and I invited the youth at my church, Brookland Baptist, to also participate. As word spread, donations poured in, surpassing anything I could have ever dreamed of. We delivered a roomful of supplies and gift bags to Mirci's Outreach Center before Christmas, and it made us happy knowing we were helping other young people who were in a very difficult

situation. The youth at my church enjoyed the project so much, we have decided to continue helping Mirci in the future."



If your group would like to raise funds or conduct a supply drive, contact us by [clicking here](#).

Save the Date!

52 WINDOWS

AN EVENING OF ART

MAY 18 • 701 WHALEY • 6PM



MIRCI

\$100 SINGLE • \$175 COUPLE • TICKETS ON SALE SOON!

SILENT ART AUCTION ~ LIVE MUSIC ~ HEAVY HORS D'OEUVRES ~ OPEN BAR

Sponsor our elegant and fun art gala!

Email kaddy@mirci.org.



For questions about volunteering or hosting a supply drive or fundraiser, please



[Donate one of our most needed items.](#)



[Become a monthly supporter at any amount.](#)

email:

mail@mirci.org

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