

ANNUAL REPORT

Year-Ending June 30, 2002

This past year has been one of growth for Y-US – growth in programs, staff, and (soon to be) office space.

In September, we doubled the number of children being served by the one-year-old Building Families FAST (Foster and Adoptive Support Team) program, per the request of the Connecticut Department of Children and Families. FAST now serves about 62 children per quarter or approximately 250 per year. In order to accommodate this increased growth, we hired two additional Behavioral Specialists to help administer the program. We also hired one new Youth Worker. Over the course of the year, one Behavioral Specialist and one Youth Worker departed, who were subsequently replaced by new staff members.

Two minivans were leased in September to handle the increased transportation needs of our agency. (Y-US provides transportation for all children to and from our programs.) Later in the year, another van was added bringing our fleet to a total of five vehicles.

In October, a part-time Resource Development Director was added to our staff to manage grant writing, fundraising, and other management-related duties in order to meet the growing needs of our agency.

We launched our first greeting card fundraiser also in October featuring [six cards designed by our children](#). It has proven to be very successful, with over \$1,600 raised to date. The fundraiser will continue this fall until all our cards are sold out. We are proud of our kids who contributed their artwork to this project!

Our annual Thanksgiving dinner and celebration was held this year at our Bloomfield Retreat House and provided all the fixings for over 100 children and families. We were fortunate to have the sponsorship of our friends at Bethel AME Church in Bloomfield to provide food and serve the meal. We were also able to provide twenty-two thanksgiving baskets complete with turkeys, to Y-US families with the help of [FoodShare of Greater Hartford](#).



Throughout the year plans were being finalized for our move into larger office space at 1477 Park Street in Hartford, in the heart of Parkville – one of the many neighborhoods we serve. The new facility has 7,200 square feet, more than four times the current space that we currently occupy! The new facility features more staff offices, expanded program space for the kids and a new commercial kitchen to facilitate serving daily dinner and occasional group parties. As this fiscal year closed, we were finalizing lease terms with a projected move date of September 2002.

Several grants were awarded to Y-US in the fall including: 1) A William and Alice Mortensen Foundation grant to update the Retreat House kitchen with a new commercial refrigerator and freezer, as well as a food preparation table and new hand washing sink. 2) The George and Grace Long Foundation supported our Junior Youth Worker program by funding two Junior Youth Worker positions for a partial year. 3) We also were the recipients of the Sally Butler Memorial grant (administered by our friends at St. John's Episcopal Church) which will help outfit the commercial kitchen in our new program space. Thank you to all our supporters, big and small, who allow us to better serve our children!

The Junior Youth Worker program was a success this year. Two former Better Horizons participants were hired to work two afternoons a week providing general assistance with the younger children. One Junior Youth Worker left in February to spend time on the college admission process. She subsequently graduated from high school and is applying to colleges. She was replaced in March by a 16-year-old female who will continue in the program for the next fiscal year. Our second original Junior Youth Worker, an 18-year-old male, is graduating high school and has been accepted to an out-of-state

college for the fall. We hope to add an additional position to the program for the next fiscal year for a total of three Junior Youth Workers.

The agency's growth took another step forward in April when Y-US was awarded a competitive contract to provide a Job Corps Outreach and Retention program. This new statewide program known as STAE (Supporting Teens Achieving Employment) will assist in recruiting DCF-involved youth for the [Connecticut Job Corps Center in New Haven](#) and provide support, retention and transition services to them. As the year closed, we were searching for a DCF Job Corps Liaison to add to our staff and otherwise planning for the start of this program in July 2002.

In May, Y-US participated in a foster parent appreciation day with DCF at Lake Compounce in Bristol. Y-US sponsored tickets for our biological families to attend as well. Approximately 110 children and parents participated in this event. A good time was had by all!

In June, Kelly Regan (Program Director) and I attended a national conference in San Diego entitled "Pathways to Adulthood 2002" which focused on recent developments in independent and transitional living for older adolescents transitioning out of foster care. The conference was well attended by national experts in the field and various service providers. We returned with new ideas and resources to aid us in the implementation of our new STAE @ Job Corps program.

During the year, two Board members departed and one new member joined - Gail Reyes. We are currently hoping to add two I members in the near future.



Collaborations with Family Life Education, Hartford Behavioral Health and VSA arts of Connecticut took place. The collaboration with VSA arts of Connecticut included "Music-n-Motion" classes with a local musical artist helping our youth create musical percussion pieces.

As the year came to a close Y-US:

- Had 17 employees
- Drove over 55,000 agency vehicle miles in previous 12 months
- Finished the year with an operating budget of \$750K
- Operated three youth programs and set-up a fourth (the new STAE program)
- Served over 300 at-risk children in this fiscal year

Respectfully submitted,

Louis Gilbert, Executive Director