



THE CENTER FOR
YOUTH & FAMILY
SOLUTIONS
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The Center for Youth and Family Solutions (CYFS) Shines Light on National Runaway Prevention Month by Lighting Up the Murray Baker Bridge

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Peoria, Ill. November 4, 2021 – According to Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, one in 10 young adults between the ages of 18 and 25, and at least one in 30 adolescents between the ages of 13 and 17 experience some form of homelessness over the course of a year. They may be couch surfing, sleeping on the streets, or staying in shelters.

To help reduce runaway incidents and youth homelessness and recognize November as National Runaway Prevention Month (NRPM), The Center for Youth and Family Solutions will be lighting up the Murray Baker Bridge on November 10th in green. This effort is designed to raise awareness of the issues faced by runaway and homeless youth and educate the greater Peoria area residents about strategies that help prevent youth from running away from home.

“Young people who have been forced out of their homes or have chosen to leave on their own may find themselves in dangerous situations that can impair both their physical and mental health,” said Betty Porter, one of The Center for Youth and Family Solutions’ Youth, Family, and Community Outreach Program Coordinators. Porter continued by stating, “Additionally, being homeless can impede a young person’s chance for success. As we work to end youth homelessness, we are joining forces with other organizations and individuals nationwide to show homeless youth they are not invisible, they are not alone, and help is available.”

National Runaway Prevention Month brings to light the issues runaway and homeless youth face every day and highlights the resources available to support youth in crisis. Resources such as the National Runaway Safeline’s 24-hour hotline and online crisis services, plus counseling services, shelters, food pantries, employment training programs, and more can make a measurable difference to youth who are considering running away as well as those living on the streets.

“During National Runaway Prevention Month, it is critical that we engage as many communities as possible to support adolescents and keep youth safe and off the streets,” said Susan Frankel, CEO of the National Runaway Safeline, the organization that spearheads NRPM. “Since the start of the pandemic, youth have endured significant mental health challenges, and now more than ever, they need to know reliable, trustworthy help is available.”

Research has shown that family dynamics (i.e., conflict over rules, divorce, blended families, and teen parenting) strongly affect a young person's desire to run away. By creating a safe and accepting home environment where youth are encouraged to be honest, the likelihood of them running away may be reduced or prevented.

For more information on the National Runaway Prevention month, go [here](#).

CYFS is a not-for-profit social services agency that works with families who have been impacted by trauma, grief and loss, abuse and neglect, and other significant family life challenges. The organization provides foster care and adoption services; behavioral health counseling; crisis pregnancy counseling; intact family intervention; residential services for youth; senior services; and youth, family, and community outreach services. Its mission is to engage and serve children and families in need with dignity, compassion, and respect by building upon individual and community strengths to resolve life challenges. **CYFS has 11 offices across Illinois, and annually serves nearly 3,800 individuals in the Peoria area, 8,000 families in 37 counties, and over 20,000 individuals statewide.**

For more information on The Center for Youth and Family Solutions, please visit www.cyfsolutions.org or contact Celeste Matheson at 309-323-6619.

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