

# Emergency Shelters

## *The challenges of Accommodating Young Adults*



Rafael Pagan Jr., LMSW

Elizabeth King, MSW

Fran Parkman

# Quick History

- Historically, in any given year we have gotten about 25 to 35 young adults (ages 18 to 24) coming to our emergency shelter.
- Due to our effort in housing the chronic homeless our daily shelter numbers have been going down.
- Then, on January 2016 a 19 year old young man, who was still in high school, showed up on our doorstep.
- Working towards setting up a separate quarters for that young man has lead to a 12 bed unit for young adults.

# Problem:

It's estimated that there are approximately  
3,000 youth/young adults homeless in  
Fairfield County

\*According to Supportive Housing Works 2016

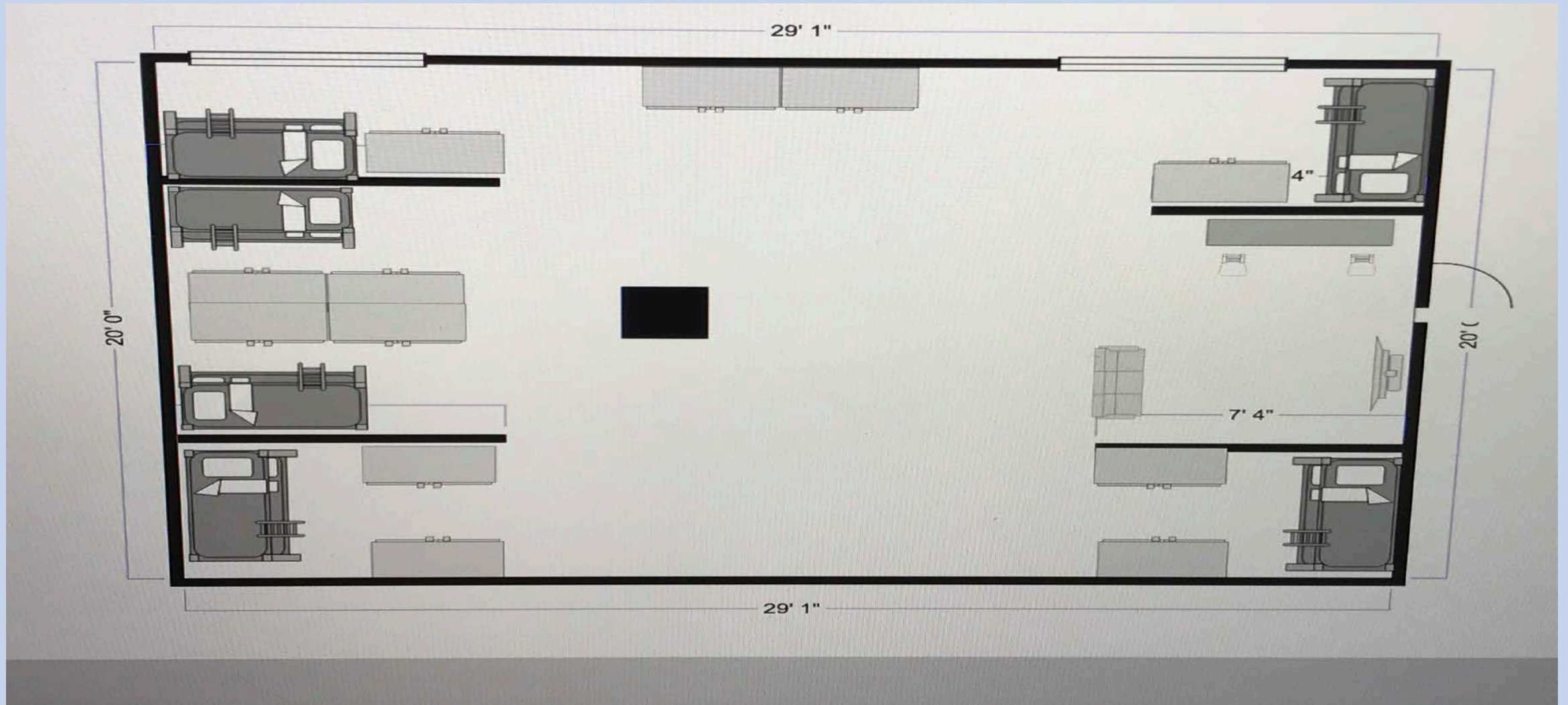
# Considerations in providing services

- Space
- Furnishings
- Program
- LBGQTQ Friendly
- Integrating Young Adult Program into the emergency shelter operations
- Funding such a program

# Environment

- Create a separate space when possible which includes showers, toilets & sleeping spaces
- Quiet space for studying and relaxing
- Appropriate furniture, lockers and equipment (i.e., desk, computers, & TV /game console)

# The Young Adult Room



# The Young Adult Room







# Program Challenges

- Program design
- Staff
- Rules and regulations for the young adult program
- Updating client manual to reflect the young adult program
- Reframing shelter culture to accommodate new program
- Emergency shelter staff training
- Measuring program outcomes

# Program Considerations

- Health care
- Behavioral Health
- Anger Management
- Wellness
- Daily living skills
- Education
- Employment
- Savings
- Housing Plan
- Recreation

# Pacific House Program Design

- Full time designated case manager
- Each client has his own bed
- Has a written Housing Plan
- Required to meet with the case manager regularly
- Work towards employment or educational goals
- Have a savings plan
- Strength-based and client centered intervention
- Promote independent living

# Creative Program Elements

- Matching Plan
- GED, SAT, and other education incentives
- GYM membership
- Diversion dollars
- Rapid Re-housing
- Mentorship/Coaching from Volunteers
- Savings/financial incentives

# Incentives

- Upon employment clients are encouraged to participate in a savings plan
- Each client working full-time is encouraged to save \$35 per week of which the agency matches up to 100%
- Each client working part-time is encouraged to save \$17.50 of which the agency matches 100% as well
- Each client is encouraged to save an additional \$250 of which the agency will match

# Young Adult Participants

- Since the program inception in January 2016 we have had 25 participants
- Demographics; 16 African American, 6 Latino, 3 white
- Gender all male
- LGTBQA 3
- 25 Young Adults were known to Child Protective Services (100%)
- 15 were placed in Foster Care (60%)
- 3 Were adopted

# Presenting issues of the participants to date

- 3 have a serious mental health diagnosis
- 8 have mild to moderate conduct disorder
- 1 marijuana use
- 9 have had some form of Probation/Criminal Involvement
- All participants experienced some major form of trauma and physical abandonment by family

# First Year Outcomes

## 14 program discharges

- 9 successful discharges
- 4 unsuccessful discharges
- 1 hospitalized
- Average Length of stay 4 months

## Housing Placements

- 3 were rapid re-housed/Diversion to family
- 2 returned back to roommates/friends upon securing employment
- 4 Moved into own apt's



# Educational outcomes

- 14 have a high school diploma
- 3 participated in GED
- 4 are considering secondary education – will be enrolling in a SAT course paid by the agency
- 1 accepted to college

# Young Adult Feedback

- Fees
- Not having a voice
- Case management
- Electronic Use
- Personal Attire
- Housing Support

# Funding Considerations

- Showing/explaining the need to funders
- Planning fundraising events (i.e., Events to end youth homelessness)
- Advocating for Government Funding
- Working with limited budget
- Managing cost and feasibility

# Questions and Comments