

Nonprofit youth, family services organization merges, becomes division of Gulf Bend

Reassignment will help area's mental health community, split costs

By J.R. ORTEGA

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A merger between CrossRoads Youth and Family Services, a private-nonprofit organization, and Gulf Bend Center will help better reach the area's mental health community and split overhead costs between the two entities.



Stan Hamlyn

The reassignment was made in April but was not official by the state until June.

The merger comes at a good time for the youth and family services, which like most nonprofits is having trouble staying afloat in a down economy, said Stan Hamlyn, the organization's executive director.

"Our organization as a whole was bleeding cash," Hamlyn said about the nonprofit, which began in 1972 and provides assistance for struggling children and their families through several programs.

Hamlyn estimates the entity took an average loss of \$30,000 to \$40,000 per year.

Much of that came from overhead costs, he said.

"It's a struggle to makes ends meet and provide the services needed in the community," Hamlyn said. "You're constantly looking for ways to cut your overhead and be more efficient."

Sharing the overhead cost will help ease the financial strain and having a co-location will benefit both entities.

"They are able to serve many of the same clients that we serve and so our partnership is going to improve our ability to serve folks in our area," Hamlyn added.

The organization's biggest program, Services to At Risk Youth, serves 800 children in Victoria, Jackson, DeWitt, Lavaca and Calhoun counties.

The merger has helped salvage and ensure the program will keep performing at an optimal level, said Don Polzin, executive director of Gulf Bend.

"It assures sustainability of the program ... and the program still maintains its identity," Polzin said.

Moving from the organization's previous location at the Victoria Regional Airport to the center was a smooth transition, Polzin added.

"All the staff now are receiving salaries and benefits and continue to provide the same level of service," he said. "We didn't miss a beat."

The idea of merging with a local entity has been on the mind of the youth and family services board for at least five years, Hamlyn said.

But it finally became a reality.

"They're a very good fit for us," he said.

What is CrossRoads Youth and Family Services and the services to at risk youth program?

CrossRoads Youth and Family Services

Formerly Youth Home of Victoria, it is a private nonprofit that has services geared toward runaway and homeless youth to at risk youth. The organization was founded in 1972 and was established by local individuals with an interest in the welfare of children at risk.

Services to At Risk Youth (STAR Program)

This program offers several services to help children and families who may find themselves in a crisis situation.

Services include:

Family counseling; both home and school based - Services provide short-term and goal oriented counseling designed to deal with the crisis situation. The goal is to teach families to use their own skills to help themselves.

Crisis intervention - A 24-hour hotline that assists families in managing difficult family situations.

Case management - A service that links families to other community agencies when other services are needed for the well-being.

Skill training - This service offers skills training in parenting, family communication, conflict resolution and anger management.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information on the services provided by the CrossRoads Youth and Family Services, call 361-578-3686 or 361-575-0611, Ext. 346 and ask for Tommie Youngblood.