

October 2015
Services and Supports for Youth at Home



Youth D and Youth L Pictured on the Porch of Their Home

By age 21, all youth leave DYS. While many youth return to families, some are not able to reside with family members due to a family's own housing hardships, expectation that the youth now live independently, relocation by the family, or sadly, severed relationships. For these youth, access to safe, affordable and stable housing is critical. In addition to providing necessary shelter, safe and stable housing is often a springboard for positive outcomes in employment, education, mental health, and peer associations. Conversely, housing that is unsafe or unstable can be a significant obstacle to a youth's success.

Our facility and parole staff work hard to make sure that every youth leaves with solid housing in place. When youth are not able to live with family, DYS helps by contracting with residential providers, including The Village Network, Abraxas, Mohican Youth Academy, Bellefaire, and others. These licensed providers specialize in helping at-risk youth through individual, group and family therapy, education, behavioral health services, and art and recreational therapy in healthy, social settings. A total of 93 youth on parole were served by residential providers in Fiscal Year 2015.

Now, thanks to a program through the Ohio Department of Medicaid, youth in these residential facilities are often eligible for services that continue to help youth in their transition to independence. The [HOME Choice](#) program transitions eligible Ohioans from institutional

settings to home and community-based settings, where they receive services and supports at home and in their communities. Youth who qualify receive:

- Community transition services
- Independent living skills training
- Community support coaching
- Case management services
- Nursing services
- Counseling services
- Nutritional consultation

In the last year, a total of 26 youth have been served through HOME Choice. While DYS can only serve a youth until his or her 21st birthday, HOME Choice services can continue for an entire year. For many youth in the program, these supportive services are in place until they are nearly 22 years old.

Dee Pendlebury is a Juvenile Parole Officer in the Akron Region and has been instrumental in linking youth to HOME Choice. She emphasizes the importance of collaboration: "It's just not one person. It starts with the region – sometimes multiple regions – and then the placing agency, and then the transitional coordinator. Everyone has to be on the same page with the kid. We're here to help these youth."

Sharon Schultz is a Transitional Coordinator with HOME Choice. She describes the importance of youth being able to gain their footing. "It is now possible to obtain the basic needs for the individuals we serve. This program fosters and promotes a steadfast foundation to build new lives on."

For Youth D and Youth, L pictured above, HOME Choice has recently extended their bridge to success. These paroled youth were both served at the Village Network and now reside together in a home thanks to HOME Choice. They are employed, gaining life skills, and are saving money for their futures.

Youth D had this to say: "I thought I was never going to get on my feet after being released. Without these programs, I would probably have been getting in more trouble just to meet the standard of living. Now, I have a job, am getting my driver's license, and starting fresh."