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Memorandum Date: October 20, 2004
Order Date: November 3, 2004

TO: Board of County Commissioners
DEPARTMENT: Children and Families
PRESENTED BY: Alicia Hays, Department Director
AGENDA ITEM TITLE: ORDER AND RESOLUTION IN THE MATTER OF PROCLAIMING NOVEMBER 2004 AS NATIONAL RUNAWAY PREVENTION MONTH IN LANE COUNTY

I. PROPOSED MOTION

MOVE APPROVAL OF THE ORDER AND RESOLUTION IN THE MATTER OF PROCLAIMING NOVEMBER 2004 AS NATIONAL RUNAWAY PREVENTION MONTH IN LANE COUNTY

II. ISSUE OR PROBLEM

Between 1.3 – 2.8 million runaway and homeless youth live on the streets of America, where they are exposed to drugs, disease, and prostitution. It is estimated that 1 in 7 youth between the ages of 10 and 18 will run away; every year, approximately 5,000 runaway and homeless youth die from assault, illness, and suicide. National Runaway Prevention month offers an opportunity to highlight the community need regarding runaway and homeless youth, and to encourage all members of our community to take action. Youth, parents, teachers, citizens, law enforcement officers, faith based groups, businesses, and service providers play critical roles in keeping all our children and youth safer and healthier. We share with you the four (4) attached handouts on what parents can do.

III. DISCUSSION

A. Background/Analysis

There is no typical runaway. These youth come from every kind of neighborhood, rich or poor, suburban, rural, urban. Many youth run away due to family dynamics, including domestic violence, divorce, remarriage, problems with family rules, discipline, or problems with

siblings. Youth often leave to remove themselves from an immediate painful situation, but with no plans for what to do next.

Approximately 2,500 youth in Lane County were identified last year as homeless, runaways, or at risk of running away. Looking Glass Youth and Family Services' Station 7 provides services for approximately 800 homeless and runaway youth per year under the age of 18. Services include family reconciliation and shelter care. 40% of these youth report physical, sexual, or emotional abuse at home. 76% report using drugs and/or alcohol.

Supporting families, and providing positive adult connections for youth help alleviate the risk of youth running away. All of us play a role. Thus, the goal of Runaway Prevention Month is to highlight the community need regarding runaway youth in Lane County and to help prevent youth from running away.

B. Alternatives/Options

1. To declare November 2004 as National Runaway Prevention Month in Lane County.
2. Not to declare November 2004 as National Runaway Prevention Month in Lane County.

C. Recommendation

Option 1, adopt the order to declare November 2004 as National Runaway Prevention Month in Lane County.

D. Timing

Upon Board approval November will be National Runaway Prevention Month.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation will be completed as stated above in "Timing."

V. ATTACHMENTS

Board Order

"Supporting Parents: Normal Adolescent Rebellion or Something More Serious"

"What are some signs my teen might be thinking about running away?"

"What should I do if my child runs away from home?"

"What should I do when my child returns home?"

THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, LANE COUNTY, OREGON

ORDER: ORDER AND RESOLUTION IN THE MATTER OF
PROCLAIMING NOVEMBER 2004 AS NATIONAL
RUNAWAY PREVENTION MONTH IN LANE COUNTY

WHEREAS, runaway youth come from every kind of neighborhood, ethnic, cultural, and spiritual backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, in 2003 approximately 2,500 youth under the age of 18, in Lane County were identified last year as homeless, runaways, or at-risk of running away; and

WHEREAS, in 2003, approximately 40% of runaway and homeless youth reported physical, sexual, or emotional abuse at home; and

WHEREAS, in 2003, 76% of runaway and homeless youth reported using drugs and/or alcohol; and

WHEREAS, nationally between 1.3–2.8 million runaway & homeless youth live on the streets of America, exposed to drugs, disease, and prostitution; and

WHEREAS, each of us plays a critical part in supporting families and youth to prevent risk of runaway behavior; and

WHEREAS, by continuing to increase awareness about the community need regarding runaway youth in Lane County and all taking a part, we can reduce the number of youth and families experiencing the factors that lead to runaway behavior; now therefore it is hereby

RESOLVED AND ORDERED, that the Lane County Board of County Commissioners hereby proclaim the month of November 2004 as **RUNAWAY PREVENTION MONTH**, and urges all Lane County citizens to work together to reduce the number of runaway and homeless youth through education and by encouraging supportive responses to families and youth facing the risk factors that may lead to runaway behaviors.

APPROVED this 3rd day of November 2004.

APPROVED AS TO FORM

Date 10/25/04 lane county
J. Zaid Law
OFFICE OF LEGAL COUNSEL

Bobby Green, Jr., Chair
BOARD OF LANE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

ORDER AND RESOLUTION IN THE MATTER OF PROCLAIMING NOVEMBER 2004 AS NATIONAL
RUNAWAY PREVENTION MONTH IN LANE COUNTY

Supporting Parents: Normal Adolescent Rebellion or Something More Serious

Working through the challenges of raising a teen

Kelly's first question when she called the National Runaway Switchboard was, "Is this a hotline just for kids?" Lisa, one of the "liners" reassured her that the NRS answers calls from anyone concerned about kids, parents, and families. Kelly was relieved and told Lisa how hard it had been for her to find someone to talk to about her son, Doug.

She and Doug had always been close, but now it's like they're strangers. Kelly said she realized that at 16, it might not be cool to go to movies with you mom anymore, but she couldn't find anything that Doug was interested in doing with her or their family. Doug's conversations with her seemed limited to "Fine, whatever, I don't care".

Kelly would chalk it up to normal teen-age rebellion but there were other things going on that kind of scared her. Lisa asked her for examples of the "other things". Kelly described recent episodes of Doug breaking curfew, leaving in the middle of the night after she had gone to bed, and once he came home drunk. Kelly scolded Doug about his behavior and tried to ground him, but Doug said he was too old for her rules and refused to follow the rules or the punishment for breaking them. Kelly didn't know what to do. She felt frustrated and confused.

Lisa asked Kelly what she wanted to tell Doug. Kelly quickly told Lisa that she wanted Doug to know that she loved him and missed spending time with him, but that his behavior was unacceptable in her house. "Things are going to have to change around her," Kelly said. Lisa agreed that changes were important since neither Kelly nor Doug seemed happy with their situation at home right now. Lisa and Kelly discussed the changes she would like to see happen.

The changes involved Kelly and Doug both making some compromises. Lisa told Kelly that not coming home drunk and not sneaking out of the house were completely reasonable rules in the house. Kelly said she would be willing to negotiate other rules like a later curfew but only if Doug earned the right for more privileges. Kelly decided it was time to confront Doug about his behavior and try to have a real talk with him for the first time in a long time

"Telling you all this is easy," Kelly said. "Telling this to Doug is a different story." Lisa helped Kelly by walking her through the process of talking to Doug. First, Lisa and Kelly made a list of what Kelly and Doug needed to talk about. Lisa encouraged Kelly to be specific and realistic. Kelly decided she would talk to Doug that night after dinner. If Doug wasn't receptive to talking, Kelly would have her brother or her mom talk to Doug. Lisa also gave Kelly referrals for counseling services in her area.

Kelly was nervous to talk with Doug, but she felt good about her plan. Lisa empathized with Kelly about how difficult the process was. Lisa thanked her for calling the hotline and let Kelly know she could callback any time.



National Runaway Switchboard

24 hours

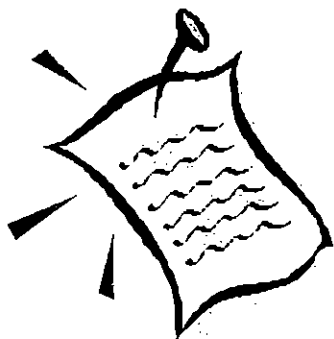
1-800-621-4000

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WHAT ARE THE SIGNS MY TEEN MIGHT BE THINKING ABOUT RUNNING AWAY FROM HOME?

“You’ll be sorry when I run away!” What parent hasn’t heard those words or even said them when they were a teenager? While no one can say for certain which teens will run and which teens won’t, here are some signals for you to look for:



Changes in behaviors or patterns mean something is wrong:

Teens who suddenly stop eating or begin to overeat, sleep all day or never sleep, spend all their time with friends or never want to leave their room. Sudden mood swings mean teens are unsettled and restless. They’re not coping well with stress.

Rebellious behavior is often the start of trouble: Dropping grades, truancy, breaking rules at home, picking fights with the family are all symptoms that your child is having problems.

Disclosure of intentions to run away: Some teens will hint that they want to run away and some will outright threaten their family with running. Sometimes their family will hear rumors through friends, school, or other parents that their child is thinking of leaving home.

Accumulation of money and possessions: To survive, runaways need money and resources. Some runaways prepare for their run by slowly withdrawing cash from their savings accounts. Keeping a bag or backpack of clothes in the closet might mean they are waiting to make a quick escape.

It is important to confront your suspicions right away. Clearly and calmly let your teen know you are concerned about them and their behavior makes you afraid they might run away from home. Invite them to talk with you or someone else about what is troubling them and be supportive of finding positive ways of dealing with their stress. Let them know you don’t want them to run away and you’re committed to helping the family work things out. If your teen is intent on running away, give them the phone number of the National Runaway Switchboard so that they can find safe options while out on their own. Tell them they can also use the NRS to stay in touch with you even if they choose not to stay at home.

NATIONAL RUNAWAY SWITCHBOARD

Helping youth and families one phone call at a time

CONFIDENTIAL **24** HOURS A DAY

Crisis Line: 1-800-621-4000

website: www.nrscrisisline.org

e-mail: info@nrscrisisline.org

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY CHILD RUNS AWAY FROM HOME?



Realizing that your child has run away from home is filled with emotion. Anger that she would do such a thing; fear for her safety; shame that others may think that you are not a **Good** parent. While some children run across city or state lines, statistics indicate that most children stay in the same general area that they live in. Some go only as far as a friend or relative. Wherever your child has gone, there are certain steps that are necessary not only for a safe return, but to protect both her rights and yours.

Notify the police and file a missing persons report. Keep records of all details of the investigation and stay in touch with authorities while your child is missing.

Call the National Runaway Switchboard at 1-800-621-4000. The NRS operates a 24-hour confidential hotline for teens and their families. Services include crisis intervention, information, referrals, and the Home Free program in partnership with Greyhound Lines, Inc. Specially trained volunteers at the hotline will help you process the situation and give you support.

Leave a message with the NRS for your child. Spread the word among your friends and your child's friends that you have done this and to encourage him/her to call. Your child can also leave messages for you.

Tell others that your teen is missing. Let them know that you are concerned and ask for their help and support. Posters can help if your teen is still in the area or contact the news desk of your local television station or newspaper.

Check any records that may give clues about your child's whereabouts. Look at phone bills, e-mail activity, pager records, credit card activity, bus or airline dockets, bank statements, and employment records.

Visit your child's school. Talk to the administration, security, teachers, or counselor for any information that might be useful.

Install Caller ID or other tracing methods, if available in your area.

Contact hotlines for parents of missing children if you think your child was abducted or you need assistance in distributing posters nationwide. The NRS can provide you with national and local referrals.

Take care of yourself and your other children. This is a difficult time and you don't have to deal with it alone. Turn to people you know and trust for support. The NRS is available 24 hours every day for you.

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WHAT SHOULD I DO WHEN MY CHILD RETURNS HOME?



Having your child return home after being gone can be traumatic both for you. Even if he was staying with friends or relatives, the time away was undoubtedly filled with anxiety. If he was out on the streets, it was probably terrifying for you both. This is a time for mixed emotions. In between hugging him for returning safely, you want to ground him for the rest of his natural life! Now the real work begins. Both of you have to deal with the problems that made him run away and how to make sure that it does not happen again. That will take hard work on both of your parts. It will take listening and compromise and communication. But most of all it will take time to learn to respect and trust each other again. Here are a few steps you can take to help make the transition easier.

Be happy he returned home. While you may be understandably very upset with him, let your first words be calm and welcoming. Many teens stay away from home because they are afraid of the initial confrontation with their parents when they return. Take a very long, deep breath and tell him that you are relieved to have him home.

Allow time to settle in. Most runaways have not had the luxury of consistent access to food or shelter while they were on the run. Perhaps she needs a shower, a meal, a clean set of clothes or a good night sleep on her own bed.

Get medical attention, if necessary. A visit to your family doctor might be in order.

Talk with your teen. Concentrate on how you can work together to prevent any repeat running away behavior. Acknowledge that some problems take a lot of time and effort to improve. Make a commitment to finding a safe and reasonable resolution to the current problems and situations.

Make follow up phone calls to anyone you contacted while he was on the run. Let friends and family know that he has returned home. Call the police to let them know that he is no longer missing.

Look for assistance. There are people and places in your community that can help your family. Counseling is helpful to everyone. Asking for help is a sign of strength and shows that you are taking the issues seriously.

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