Our Mission

Ain Dah Yung Center

PROVIDES A HEALING PLACE
for AMERICAN INDIAN YOUTH
AND FAMILIES
to thrive in safety
and wholeness.

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The Ain Dah Yung Center continues to be a cornerstone for community living. We are committed to ensuring that American Indian youth and families in the Twin Cities Area retain access to their indigenous rights of community belonging and cultural identity. The following values continue to guide our actions and decisions:

• Safety always comes first
• We treat each other with love, kindness, respect and dignity
• Native language, traditions, spirituality and storytelling are the keys to healing and thriving in our community
• We act with integrity and accountability as stewards of community resources
• Honor and humility help us weather many storms and keep moving forward
• We empower all to dream, set high standards and achieve

Ain Dah Yung Center Programs

Our Emergency Shelter provides culturally specific emergency shelter to American Indian youth who are homeless, runaway, in a family crisis, or involved with juvenile corrections. Services include: emergency shelter, short-term crisis intervention, case management, and systems advocacy, information and referrals, access to medical/dental care, counseling, case management and education support. The Ain Dah Yung Center is the only 24-hour emergency shelter facility for any youth in Ramsey County and the East Metro, and is the only American Indian youth emergency shelter available to American Indian youth in the Twin Cities metro area. While there are other youth serving shelters, we are unique in our ability to serve children as young as age five. This enables us to keep-our-gates closed, together, of critical importance to our Native families and a benefit to all families in general. In 2015, 87 youth were provided with emergency shelter; 79% of shelter residents had a minimum of one individual session with the Youth and Family Counselor. 92% of youth received an initial mental health assessment, entering shelter and 100% were offered in-home individual and/or group counseling.

Najnjing (Our Children) Program

A multi-program model of engagement support – working to keep our youth in Native culture while designed to combat chemical and communicable diseases, and violent crime. Programs focus on traffic lighting and other self-compassion behaviors among at- risk American Indian youth. It is an opportunity for community involvement, leadership development, culturally specific health education, and cultural enrichment activities. Najnjing develops cultural pride and strengths the skills our young people need to become community leaders and mothers for other American Indian children. The program is prevention in participation and cultural activities including monthly family nights.

Roverley & Benjamin Youth Lodge

A culturally grounded residential treatment program available to youth between the ages of 15-21. The Lodge provides a Native home environment where they can safely stay. This intervention program emphasizes training, education and employment goals and is designed to develop a support system to meet holistic needs of body, mind, and spirit. Youth Lodge services emphasize the relationship between youth and positive role models (staff and elders) to teach new behaviors, learn appropriate ways to express feelings and manage everyday lives. Creating community and cultural connections helps the inner strength of youth to better educate them for independent or inter-dependent living. Helping to break the cycle of homelessness. 90% of youth who come to the Youth Lodge finish high school, continue their education, become self-sufficient, and finally make a successful transition home. 2015 the Youth Lodge assisted 15 youth. 100% of youth received an initial mental health assessment and met with the Youth and Family Counselor monthly.

The Street Outreach Program provides street-based support to runaway or homeless youth unable or not wanting to enter a shelter. Case workers provide information on safe housing, basic needs resources and health related issues. They also provide health and personal care supplies, food and access to transportation. Youth are provided with drop-in services where they can eat a hot meal, do laundry, or shower. 2015 brought funding cut to the Streets/Works program. We are able to outreach workers in July and since then connected with 350 new youth contacts and 123 repeat youth.

Jayne Navajo (Stand with the People) Program

Designed to keep American Indian families together and strong by providing the knowledge, skills and resources they need to provide a safe, stable environment for their children. Programs and services include:

• Ramsey County Children’s Mental Health Case Management: Provides support, case management and assistance in identifying resources for families who have mental health needs. In 2015, the Children’s Mental Health Case Management case managed 39 youth and 59 families,

• Family Preservation and Reunification: Our Family Advocacy Program uses traditional American Indian teachings and an asset-based approach that builds on the strengths of families and was established in response to the disproportionate placement of American Indian children outside the home. We provide family preservation and reunification services that combine self-help, professional intervention and cultural modification in order to strengthen families experiencing a process of family reunification and/or informal kinship care. Our family advocacy program supports families through group meetings, increasing positive social networks, family preservation and reunification, legal representation, therapeutic case management, appropriate referrals, resource acquisition, and general family support. Preservation and reunification services were provided to 32 families with a total of 46 children served. There were 33 families served through parenting/family groups in 2015.

• Indian Child Welfare Legal Advocacy/Compliance (ICWL) Program: was created to ensure compliance with the federal Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). ICWA was created to prevent the disproportionate placement of American Indian children and to reduce the number of American Indian children in out-of-home placement. The Ain Dah Yung Center’s ICWL Program provides court monitoring on cases involving American Indian children, legal representation to American Indian families (through a collaboration with Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services), and outreach/education to identify systemic problems and strategies on solutions regarding ICWA compliance. In 2015, 239 hearings and 361 children were monitored in Ramsey County for ICWA compliance. 90 families received full legal representation from our SRLS attorney and 9 families received partial representation.