



YFES – STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES

Families who struggle with addiction, violence, illness or other crises drain a community of its resources – they may have difficulty maintaining employment, need greater medical care or require police intervention. As part of a “vicious cycle,” the young people who grow up in these families are often doomed to repeat the pattern in their own adult lives.

Youth and Family Enrichment Services (YFES) is a private non-profit agency in San Mateo County that provides a wide array of free and low-cost services to help children, teens and adults who are dealing with substance abuse, domestic violence, mental health, relationship, and communication issues.

YFES programs help people find internal strengths they didn’t know they had, and use them to change their lives for the better by:

- **breaking the cycles of substance abuse and violence**
- **keeping children in safe, supportive homes**
- **helping young people without families learn independence**
- **helping individuals and families to learn coping and communication skills**
- **connecting people with community resources**

YFES offers a wide variety of programs that help individuals and families deal with issues at every stage of life, and every stage of problem:

Prevention—YFES offers several programs and hotlines that give people the knowledge, skills and resources they need to avoid risky behaviors and provide a safe and stable living situation for their families. The agency also helps children of alcoholics learn about and break the cycle of addiction.

Early Intervention—In many cases, a first-time criminal offense is the sign of a family problem or the result of lack of knowledge. YFES helps first offenders learn about the causes and consequences of their actions, to give them a second chance. The agency also offers programs that attempt to address psychological issues in very young children before they develop chronic mental health problems.

Education—Many YFES programs teach people about a broad range of emotional and behavioral difficulties and their effects, and help them formulate effective strategies to deal with these challenges. YFES programs aim to teach parents, teachers, law enforcement and other community members about availability of resources, and methods of creating and reinforcing healthy behaviors among community members.

Counseling Programs—Through individual, family and group counseling, YFES helps people to identify and work through personal issues that impede healthy growth and development. Counseling helps people to resolve conflicts, strengthen family systems, explore and develop personal identity, and learn about how others are dealing with similar issues, in a safe, supportive, non-judgmental environment. Several programs offer more intensive treatment for clients who are dealing with trauma or multiple mental health and substance abuse issues.

Residential Programs—These programs provide a temporary home for young people who are unable to live with their family due to family crisis, alcohol and/or drug use, domestic violence, or other homelessness. Whenever possible, our goal is to reunify the whole family. For foster care children and young people who cannot return to their home, we offer several programs that teach independent living skills and provide housing assistance.