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The stories told in this document are based on actual events that have occurred in the lives of clients of Directions For Youth & Families. The identities have been altered to protect the children and their families.



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DIRECTIONS
for youth & families

2003 STATE OF THE CHILD™

In Central Ohio

- Over 50,000 Ohio children are victimized or neglected each year.¹
- The violent victimization of juveniles is greatest between 3:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m.²
- 67% of Ohio adolescents spend at least one day a week at home alone after school.³
- Over one-half of juvenile victims of a violent crime commit a violent crime within the next year.²
- 15% of Franklin County children live in poverty.⁴
- Poor children are three times as likely to have fair or poor health.¹
- They are twice as likely to repeat a grade.¹
- Just over half of Columbus teenagers graduate from high school.⁵
- Less than 40% of children born to high school dropouts recognized letters upon entering kindergarten.⁶
- Over 85% of children born to college graduates recognized letters upon entering kindergarten.⁶
- More than 5,000 Franklin County youths between 16 and 19 have dropped out of school.⁴
- Approximately 80% of teenage mothers will not graduate from high school.⁷

- In one-third of all reported sexual assault cases, the victim is under the age of 12.²
- 1 in 3 girls will be sexually victimized by age 18.⁸
- 1 in 6 boys will be sexually victimized by age 18.⁸
- 16% of Franklin County high school seniors and juniors reported smoking cigarettes daily.⁹
- 23% reported using marijuana once a month.⁹
- 38% reported using alcohol monthly.⁹
- In Franklin County, suicide and homicide account for approximately one-third of all teenage deaths.¹⁰
- The US youth homicide rate is 5 times higher than other industrial nations.²
- The suicide rate is 3 times higher.²
- An Ohio child is killed by gunfire every 5 days.¹
- 25% of juvenile homicides involve another juvenile.²
- 60% of juvenile murders are committed by a family member.²

But these are just numbers.

To even begin to understand what life is like for many children today, you need to look beyond statistics and figures. You need to get inside the hearts, minds, and challenges of a child. You need to realize the pressures and pains that many children experience. And try, somehow, to comprehend how some of these kids simply cannot overcome their challenges, while others seem to be made stronger by them.

No matter how difficult some of the following stories may be to read or even imagine, they will hopefully give you a small glimpse into the reality in which many children are forced to live.

This is the 2003 State of the Child in Central Ohio.

When you have finished reading the 2003 State of the Child, please pass it on to a friend. Thank you.

1. Children's Defense Fund
2. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
3. Kid's Time Middle School Survey Report
4. U.S. Census Bureau
5. Ohio Department of Education
6. Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics
7. Youth at Risk: Saving the World's Most Precious Resource by Gene Stephens
8. The Future of Children "Current Information of the Scope of Sexual Abuse" by Davis Finkelhor
9. Primary Prevention, Awareness, Attitude, and Use Survey
10. Ohio Department of Health

Q: How old are you?
A: 23.
Q: Are you married or single?
A: Single.
Q: How many children do you have?
A: Two.
Q: And you want to give them up for adoption, correct?
A: No, just the boy. He's almost three.
Q: You want your 3-year-old son to be adopted?
A: Yes.
Q: And what about your other child?
A: I'm keeping her. She's 18 months.
Q: You're keeping the girl?
A: Yes.
Q: And giving up the boy?
A: Yes.
Q: Does he have some sort of physical or mental handicap that makes him a burden or hardship for you to raise?
A: No.
Q: Do the children have a relationship with their father?

A: They have different daddies. They're both bums.
Q: So, why are you giving up your son?
A: I don't really love him.
Q: Do you love your daughter?
A: Yes.
Q: Have you ever loved your son?
A: Not really. He's dirty. He's useless. They took him away from me at the hospital because they thought I was going to hurt him or something. He didn't come to live with me until he was 8 months old. I was already pregnant with Kaylee by then. I only ever wanted one kid. And he was never mine. They took him from me.
Q: Why did you wait until now to give him up for adoption if you never wanted him?
A: I wanted to prove that they couldn't take him from me. They did that once. I wasn't going to let them do it again.
Q: What made you change your mind?
A: He needs to be taken care of. I can't do it. I can barely even stand to touch him.
Q: But you can take care of your daughter?
A: Yes. I love her.
Q: But you don't love your son?
A: Only enough to let someone else take care of him.

* Franklin County Children Services

Age 10

Tried alcohol for the first time.

Age 11

Began drinking whenever he could get his hands on some alcohol.

Age 12

Began using marijuana, crack, and crystal meth.

Age 13

Was suspended from school for repeated truancy.

Age 14

He and his girlfriend snuck out to attend a party. Both got drunk and high. Brandon left with some buddies. When he came back, he found his girlfriend had passed out and been raped by some guys at the party.

Age 15

Franklin County Children Services referred Brandon to a drug and alcohol rehabilitation center.

Age 16

Brandon's mother checked herself into a rehabilitation center to address her crack addiction.

Age 17

Brandon (sober for seven months) began speaking at area middle schools about the hazards of drinking and drugs.

"Some of our older friends had some beer. And they gave us some. It tasted disgusting and made David sick. I liked how it made me feel."

"If we tried, we could always find a way to get some. Sometimes, we'd have to do favors for the older kids. But we always got some alcohol, one way or another."

"My cousin told me that if I liked the way alcohol made me feel, I should try smoking a joint. Later that year, I started stealing mom's crack. That stuff really messed with me."

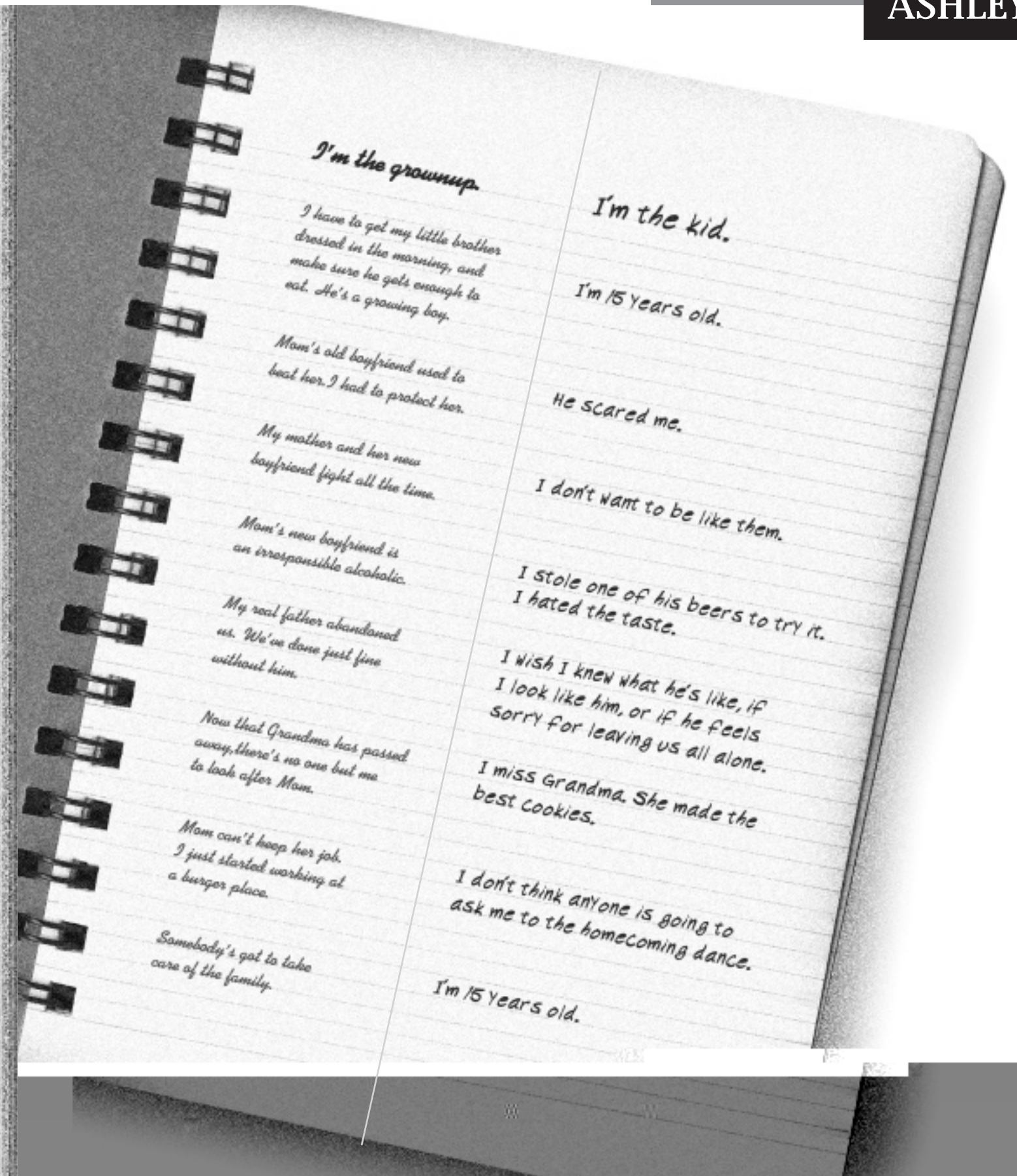
"I lost interest. I couldn't concentrate. All I wanted to do was get drunk and high."

"I didn't want to believe it. I tried to blame her. But inside, I blamed myself. Luckily, she tested negative. We never did find out who those guys were. All I know is that they were the ones who brought the hard stuff."

"I didn't see the need. I was fine. I had my friends. I had lots of ways to get alcohol and drugs. That program had nothing for me."

"I told myself if she could do it, I could too."

"If I hadn't cleaned up, I'd be a high school dropout with nothing to look forward to except my next score. Now, I'm looking forward to graduation and college. I'm going to be a child psychiatrist. I want to help people."



Kids who smoke marijuana are 85 times more likely to use cocaine than their non-marijuana smoking peers.*

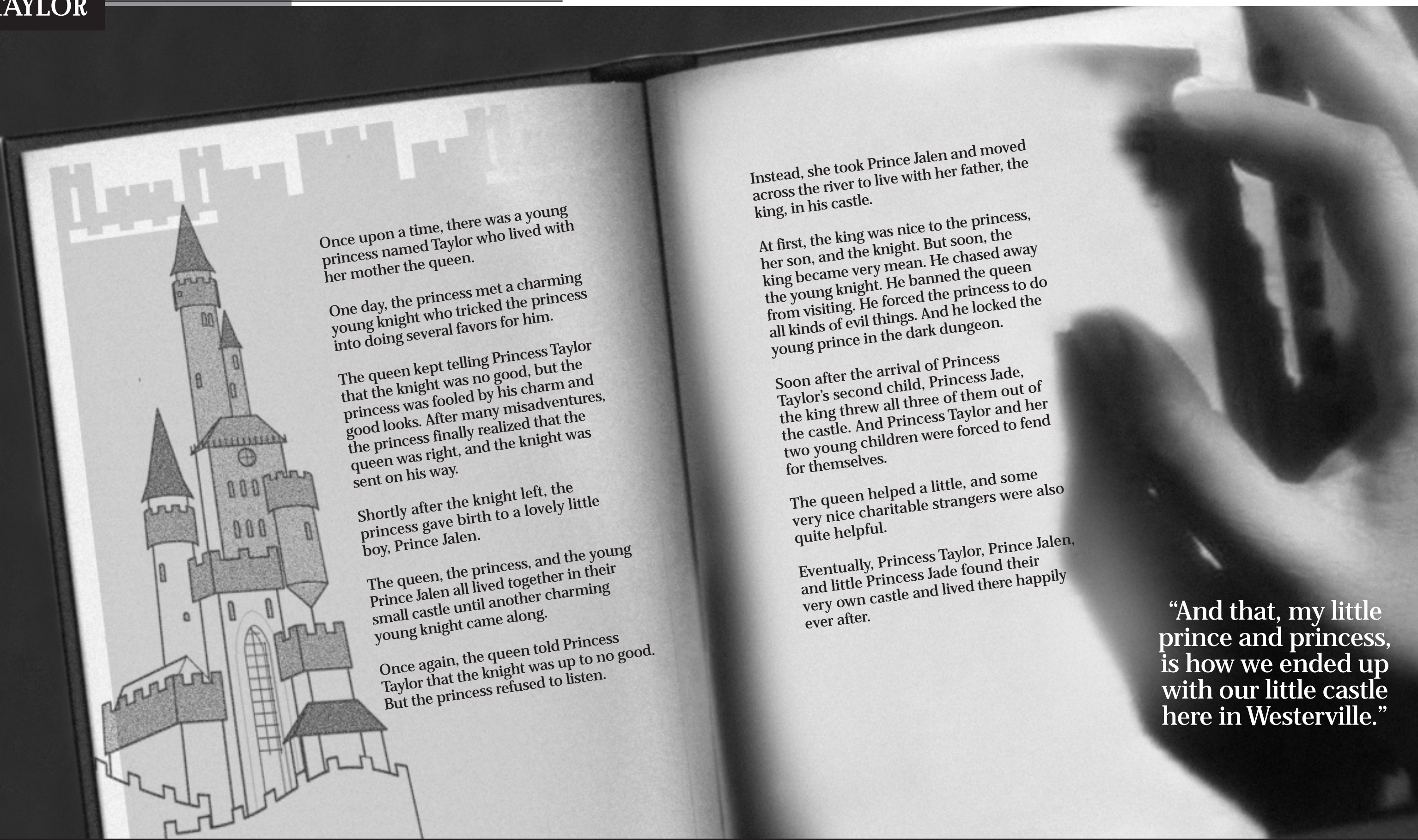
In 2002, Directions For Youth & Families helped 265 children deal with their substance abuse challenges.

* Columbia University from DrugFreeTeenagers.com

29% of Franklin County children live in a single parent home.*

Since 2000, Directions For Youth & Families has helped over 10,000 Franklin County children in their homes, schools, and neighborhoods.

* U.S. Census Bureau



Once upon a time, there was a young princess named Taylor who lived with her mother the queen.

One day, the princess met a charming young knight who tricked the princess into doing several favors for him.

The queen kept telling Princess Taylor that the knight was no good, but the princess was fooled by his charm and good looks. After many misadventures, the princess finally realized that the queen was right, and the knight was sent on his way.

Shortly after the knight left, the princess gave birth to a lovely little boy, Prince Jalen.

The queen, the princess, and the young Prince Jalen all lived together in their small castle until another charming young knight came along.

Once again, the queen told Princess Taylor that the knight was up to no good. But the princess refused to listen.

Instead, she took Prince Jalen and moved across the river to live with her father, the king, in his castle.

At first, the king was nice to the princess, her son, and the knight. But soon, the king became very mean. He chased away the young knight. He banned the queen from visiting. He forced the princess to do all kinds of evil things. And he locked the young prince in the dark dungeon.

Soon after the arrival of Princess Taylor's second child, Princess Jade, the king threw all three of them out of the castle. And Princess Taylor and her two young children were forced to fend for themselves.

The queen helped a little, and some very nice charitable strangers were also quite helpful.

Eventually, Princess Taylor, Prince Jalen, and little Princess Jade found their very own castle and lived there happily ever after.

“And that, my little prince and princess, is how we ended up with our little castle here in Westerville.”

MY FATHER

He can't touch me no more.
But he still haunts my dreams.
He can't touch me no more.
But his letters bring tears to my eyes and fear to my soul.
He can't touch me no more.
But his family threatens me on the street.
He can't touch me no more.
But where he touched me,
how he touched me,
I still feel the pain.

MY MOTHER

She tries.
But she doesn't know how to help.
She loves me.
But she has no idea how to show it.
She wants to take care of us.
But she can't keep a job.
She thinks she's helping.
But there's really nothing she can do.
She says she understands what I'm going through.
But she doesn't understand what he did to me.
She'll never understand.
She can't understand.

MY LIFE

I was sexually abused by my father.
But I realize it wasn't my fault.
I'm being raised by a woman with the mind of a child.
But I know she's doing her best.
I lived among crack houses, gang wars, and prostitutes.
But I've moved out of that neighborhood.
I had given up on myself and my future.
But I'm turning things around.
I could easily become another ghetto statistic.
But I refuse to let that happen to me.
I will go beyond my situation.
I will surpass anyone's expectations.

I'm not stupid. I just don't like school. I don't like how they make me do all that kid stuff.
Stand up now. Talk now. Be quiet now.

Always telling me what to do, like I'm some kinda kid. I'm 15 years old, surrounded by 6th graders.
6th graders know nothing about nothing but toys and cartoons and kid stuff. They don't even know
nothing about music, or movies, or sex, or drinking, or nothing. They just kids.

I know more than all these kids. They even ask me questions about stuff. But 'cause I can't do good
on tests, everyone says I'm stupid.

Well, I'll show them who's stupid. As of right now, I hate school. And I hate everything about school.
I'm never listening to any teacher, never again. I hate them all. And the principal, I hate her even more.

They treat me like I'm an idiot.

Starting now, they gonna treat me like a man. I'll make sure they know I ain't a kid.

They say I gotta sit here in these little desks made for little kids. And I gotta do this and do that.
I ain't gotta do anything I don't want to do, never again.

What these teachers ever do for me?

They say I'm stupid. They gonna wish I was stupid.
They know nothing about me. They know nothing about my family. Nothing about my neighborhood.

Nothing about my mom. And they sure don't know nothing about my dad. I don't even know nothing
about him, except he was a drug dealer and a dropout. Then he got my mom pregnant, and then
he got himself killed.

Mom says he was stupid. I ain't like him. I ain't stupid.

Maybe there's a different school, one with kids more like me. Kids my age. Kids who ain't stupid,
but don't do good in regular school. If I could go to a school like that, maybe I could do better,
graduate, and do something.

But right now, I'm doing nothing.

Over 80% of juvenile sexual assaults take place in the victim's home.*

In 2002, Directions For Youth & Families helped 97 boys and girls between the ages of 7 and 18 who had been sexually abused.

There are over 5,000 Franklin County teenagers who have dropped out of school.*

Last year, Directions For Youth & Families opened a charter school that helped 20 children who were struggling to succeed in traditional school settings.

* Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

* U.S. Census Bureau

I have a son.
I've never seen him.
I didn't want to believe Jennifer when she told me.
I said she was lying.
I said it wasn't mine.
I knew she was telling the truth.
I knew he was mine.
I dropped out of her life.
I dropped out of school.
I was scared.
I was a punk.
I didn't deserve to know my son.
I've changed.

She had every right to be mad at me.
She still hasn't forgiven me.
She's punishing me for acting like such a punk.
She's punishing me for being scared.
She's convinced I haven't changed.
She told me she might never let me see him.
She said I'd have to earn my right to meet Oscar.
She didn't say what that means.
She just said it and walked away.

He lives with his mom and grandma.
He's almost two now.
He walks.
He talks.
He probably calls Jennifer's new boyfriend "daddy."
He's never seen me.
He wouldn't recognize me if I walked up to him on the street.
He has no idea I exist.
He may never know who I am.
He may never know that I love him.

I want to know my son.
She gave me a picture.
He's beautiful.

Dear Mom,
Everybody is fine here.
Sammy was sick last week, but I made him stay in bed and eat his soup.
He is better now. We played in the park after school today. I wish you were there. I miss you a lot.
Sammy misses you too. He asked me when you will be back. I did not know what to tell him. I read him his favorite book, Green Eggs and Ham.
School is going OK. 7th grade is way harder than 6th. But Miss Tamica from across the street helps me.
I got a new T-shirt last weekend. Tariq took me to this old church that teenagers hang out in. This guy there airbrushes T-shirts. He made me one. It looks real cool and says "RIP MOM. Don't worry. I'm taking care of Sammy."
I wear it all the time. It makes me miss you less. But I still miss you a lot.
Love,
Terrell

You have just read eight stories that represent the thousands of children who are helped by Directions For Youth & Families each year.

Some of these children have had awful things happen to them.

Some had terrible things happen to people they love.

Some made poor decisions.

Some got in a little over their heads.

Some were looking for a way to cope with the violence around them.

Some were looking for an easy way out.

Some were simply in the wrong place at the wrong time.

But whatever their specific reason, all of these children – and thousands more just like them – need someone to give them a little direction.

Please don't forget these stories.
And don't forget these children.

It's only with the help of people like you that organizations such as Directions For Youth & Families can help these children.

To learn how you, your family, your organization, or your business can help Directions For Youth & Families,

please call 614-294-2661
or visit www.dfyf.org.

To help children and families such as the ones featured in this year's State of Child, Directions For Youth & Families provides outreach, prevention and treatment programs.

These programs help children with behavioral issues, alcohol and drug addictions, and a history of domestic violence.

They help children make mature decisions about sex and pregnancy, dispute resolution, and criminal activity.

They have programs for children who have been the victims of physical and sexual abuse, who have witnessed acts of violence, who have lost a loved one to homicide, and who have given birth to children while still being children themselves.

But that's not all. Directions for Youth and Families also helps children understand the importance of tolerance, appreciation for differences, abstinence, respect, self-esteem, responsibility, making the right choices, and hard work.

As a result of the efforts of the staff and volunteers at Directions For Youth & Families, Franklin County has saved millions of dollars in reduced costs of prosecution, incarceration, property loss, and child welfare.

More importantly, however, thousands of area youth have received the direction their lives so badly needed.



On July 1, 2002 Crittenton Family Services and Directions For Youth joined their services and resources and emerged as Directions For Youth & Families. The following reports are from *fiscal* year 2002 and reflect each organization, pre-merger.

Crittenton Family Services

Clients Served in Fiscal Year 2002:

Prevention Programs	2,653
Treatment Programs	1,830
Total Served	4,483

Statement of Revenue and Expenses for Fiscal Year 2002:

Revenues:			
	Government	\$	1,864,985
	United Way		917,729
	Contributions		88,590
	Fees for Services		125,618
	Investment Income		15,523
	Miscellaneous		40,693
	TOTAL:	\$	3,053,138

Expenses:			
	Program	\$	2,730,101
	Support Services		
	Management & General		212,434
	Fundraising		39,874
	TOTAL:	\$	2,982,409

Directions For Youth

Children Served in Fiscal Year 2002:

Prevention Programs	2,193
Treatment Programs	1,719
Total Served	3,912

Statement of Revenue and Expenses for Fiscal Year 2002:

Revenues:			
	Government	\$	\$2,544,015
	United Way		540,149
	Contributions		263,383
	Fees for Services		2,516
	Investment Income		13,820
	Miscellaneous		57,225
	Capital Campaign		257,149
	TOTAL:	\$	3,678,257

Expenses:			
	Program	\$	\$2,874,656
	Support Services		
	Management & General		247,793
	Fundraising		162,837
	TOTAL:	\$	\$3,285,286*

*Surplus of revenues over expenses is comprised of capital campaign pledges and other contributions.