



CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION IN TIMES OF CRISIS

IMPACT REPORT
2020



WHATEVER IT TAKES, 2020

This year has not been easy. COVID-19 did its best to disrupt our mission. Shelter-at-home orders, closed courts, schools and partner services affected the ability of many clients to access services. Major fundraising events were canceled and volunteer services were suspended for months.

But we can proudly say that Waymakers has done—and continues to do—**Whatever it Takes** to deliver meaningful services to thousands of people in Orange County.

Thanks to the **creativity, determination and resilience of our team members**, we identified ways to keep all programs and youth shelters open and fully operational. By implementing social distancing, client health screenings, enhanced sanitizing procedures and creating innovative service delivery patterns, we were able to stay connected to vulnerable clients.

Thanks to the generosity of the community, we were able to meet the needs of our clients—even in the early stages of the pandemic. Over 40 individuals and organizations gave financial support and donated hygiene supplies, masks, meals and other essentials to Waymakers.

Thanks to new and established partnerships, Waymakers has found ways to increase our reach and program services. In the midst of uncertain and challenging times, Waymakers has been able to secure funding and contracts for additional and expanded projects.

Most importantly, thank you! Our ability to provide essential services would not be possible without the caring concern of community members like you. Your support allows us to guide individuals experiencing conflict and crisis as they forge pathways to positive change, strength and stability.

YOURS IN GRATITUDE,



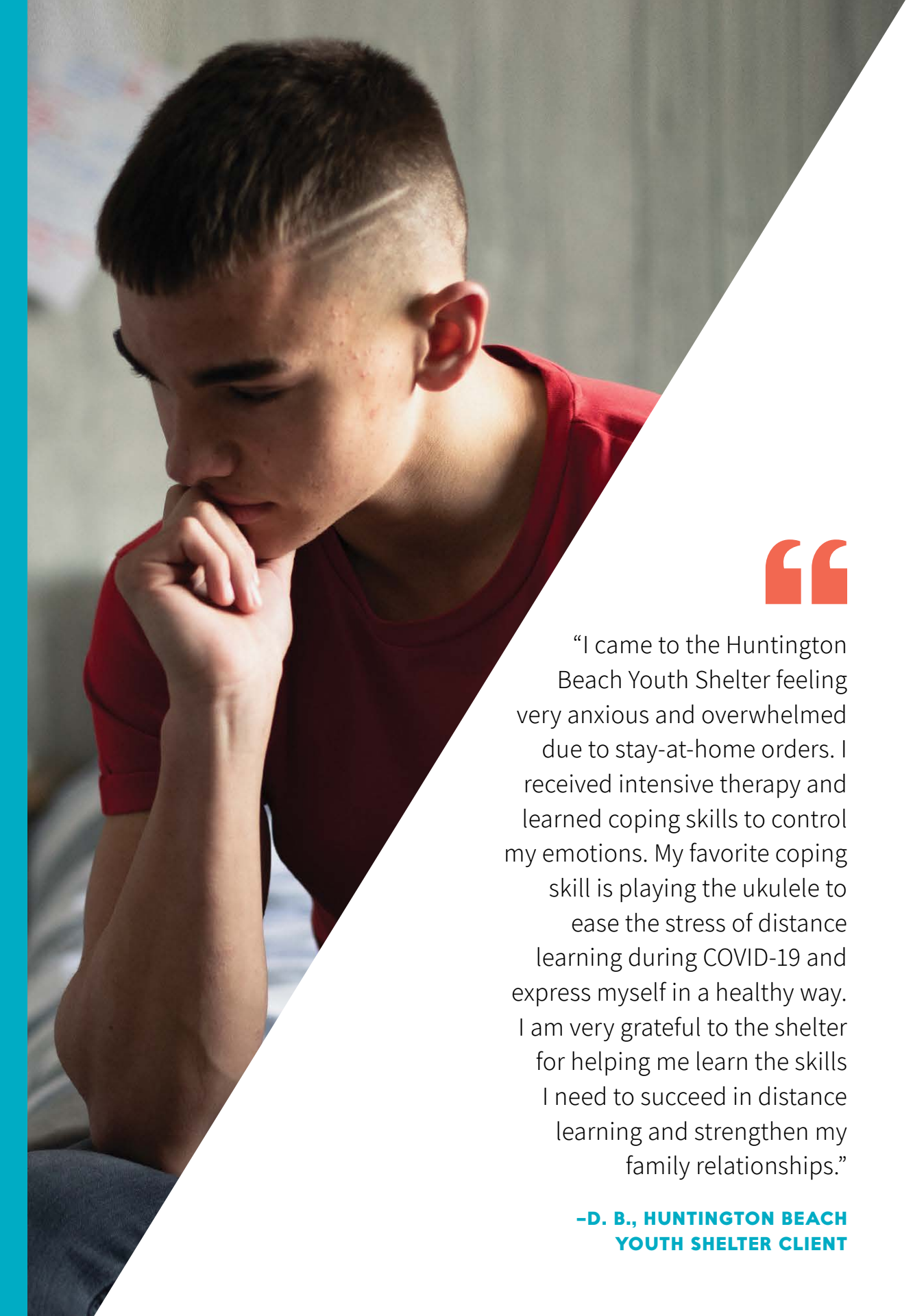
Ronnetta Johnson

RONNETTA JOHNSON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Jason Smallwood

JASON SMALLWOOD
BOARD PRESIDENT



“I came to the Huntington Beach Youth Shelter feeling very anxious and overwhelmed due to stay-at-home orders. I received intensive therapy and learned coping skills to control my emotions. My favorite coping skill is playing the ukulele to ease the stress of distance learning during COVID-19 and express myself in a healthy way. I am very grateful to the shelter for helping me learn the skills I need to succeed in distance learning and strengthen my family relationships.”

**-D. B., HUNTINGTON BEACH
YOUTH SHELTER CLIENT**



OUR MISSION

Waymakers
builds **SAFER
COMMUNITIES**
by **HELPING
INDIVIDUALS**
make their
way through
conflict and
crisis to a place
of **STRENGTH
AND
STABILITY.**

SHELTERING CHILDREN

Waymakers provides a safe haven for children ages 11–17 who are homeless, runaway, abused or struggling with mental health issues. Working with the family unit, we introduce problem-solving techniques and positive communication skills to support healthier situations at home.

1,698

youth and family members served

94%

of youth successfully reunified
with their families

SUPPORTING VICTIMS

Waymakers works with victims of crime and surviving family members as they learn to cope with the aftermath of crime. Victim advocates meet the needs of all survivors with specialized response for domestic violence, sexual assault, homicide, gang violence, human trafficking and mass victimization.

17,857

crime victims served

\$464,183

financial restitution secured for victims

RESOLVING CONFLICTS

Waymakers mediation and restorative justice programs make all the difference for community members who face conflicts or youth who act out in delinquent or disruptive ways. Trained mediators help individuals resolve their concerns and find sustainable solutions that lead to safer communities.

2,261

disputing parties

63%

cases successfully resolved

COUNSELING FAMILIES

Waymakers supports at-risk youth ages 11-25 and their families in addressing mental health, housing, education, employment and basic survival needs. Individual and group therapy, skill development programs, and wraparound support help young people identify and overcome challenges to accomplish their goals.

15,011

youth and family members served

15,877

counseling hours provided to youth and family members

EDUCATING COMMUNITIES

Waymakers education and prevention programs work throughout the community to provide knowledge that can lead to fewer occurrences of sexual assault and other crimes, deter gang activity and create greater awareness of problems often associated with alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

9,482

individuals received educational trainings

156,425,085

impact/reach of media campaigns

PAVING THE WAY THROUGH DIFFICULT TIMES

NO MATTER WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE WORLD,

Waymakers' clients depend on our vital support services. While everything was shutting down due to COVID-19, our leaders and team members stepped up to ensure clients could continue to have access to the help they required. Keeping our clients' best interest and safety in mind, we continue to adapt and remain nimble, ready to pivot at a moment's notice to support individuals in crisis. Through a time of great uncertainty, Waymakers challenged ourselves to learn and set new standards of excellence that will serve us well into the future as we continue to meet the needs of our community.



MAINTAINING ESSENTIAL CONNECTIONS

Anticipating a “Safer at Home” order from the State, most of our team began working remotely on March 17. Program leadership rose to this new challenge; quickly determining how to provide Waymakers’ services while rigorously adhering to COVID-19 safety protocols. We rapidly adjusted to telehealth appointments, phone/online activities and no-contact emergency assistance. Education programs pivoted from in-person delivery to creative and informative formats available via Zoom or video and 24/7 program assistance continued without a lapse. Understanding the importance of human connection, especially in times of crisis, we found a way to make personal interactions possible through socially distanced counseling.

STEPPING UP BIG FOR STRUGGLING YOUTH AND FAMILIES

Our youth shelters in Huntington Beach, Tustin and Laguna Beach have observed more complex mental health issues since



Client building self confidence
—Aug 2019

the arrival of COVID-19. Many young people already struggle with depression and anxiety—challenges exacerbated by the fear and uncertainty associated with a public health crisis. The pandemic has isolated them from friends or other support structures and brought on the stress of family members facing unemployment. Such upheaval and trauma can lead to suicide threats or attempts, and other at-risk behaviors.

Given the urgency and the need, all three shelters found ways to maintain support for these vulnerable youth. Each shelter reconfigured spaces, instilled health checks and implemented stringent adherence to health and social distancing guidelines. Telehealth and online programs are keeping clients connected to family members and providing needed family counseling services. And because volunteers are prohibited from coming on-site due to safety concerns, shelter staff are now teaching classes such as yoga, music lessons and gardening. There are many challenges to serving children and their

families amid a pandemic, but Waymakers found ways to continue supporting struggling youth during a time of great need.

STANDING BESIDE SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

Times of isolation and crisis can lead to an increased risk of sexual assault and abuse. Additionally, concerns surrounding the pandemic can lessen survivors' willingness to access services—yet this is the time when survivors need support more than ever. Our Sexual Assault Victim Services (SAVS) team has continued to meet the needs of clients while adhering to COVID-19 safety protocols. Waymakers has supported survivors during the pandemic through ongoing crisis counseling by phone, text, email or other electronic modes of communication, and by making support available during criminal justice proceedings. To help build safer communities, SAVS created awareness of sexual assault and primary prevention techniques through virtual presentations and social media.

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