

# Mockingbird Times



Building a world class foster care system while serving our neighborhood youth

April 2004

Foster Care and Homeless Youth Speak out Across the Nation

Volume IV, Issue 4

Visit us online at [www.mockingbirdsociety.org](http://www.mockingbirdsociety.org)

## ILP Helps Young Face Challenge of Adulthood

J. EBOH



**EVERYONE KNOWS THAT BECOMING AN ADULT** is a difficult task. There are some hard questions you have to find a way to answer. For example, how will you be able to afford housing that isn't entirely infested with rats? How can you manage to eat every day? The most important question to answer is, how will you find a job that can actually help you achieve this? This is especially difficult if you are in foster care, in which case you probably don't have too much support coming from your family. An additional problem for foster kids is that they usually aren't taught many skills about how to live independently.

Due to a lack of public awareness (and funding), there aren't enough quality programs available. However, one such program does exist. The Independent Living Program (ILP), is a national program that offers life skills training through weekly group sessions, individual case management, career and education planning, job preparation/readiness training, leadership development, community referral, and special activities. The services are available for youth between the ages of sixteen to

eighteen who are transitioning out of state care and have been referred by their DSHS social worker before emancipating from care (before aging out of the system).

The YMCA of Greater King County manages the ILP program for Seattle and is making efforts to go beyond providing youth with just the basics. According to Marlon Buchanan, the State Coordinator for the ILP program throughout Washington State, "The biggest thing youth get from the program is being mentored and getting long-term ongoing support. Foster kids don't get that." Buchanan intends on continuing to improve the program throughout the state, claiming, "In three years I want to make this the best program for foster youth in the State." When asked

**"Destiny is not a matter of choice; it is not a thing to be waited for, it is a thing to be achieved."**

--William Jennings Bryan

why he is so enthusiastic about his work, Buchanan responded by saying, "It may sound like a cliché, but our youth really are our future. The better we prepare youth, the better our communities will become."

One feature of the program is a sixty dollar a week allowance for six months after a participant turns eighteen. When participants turn eighteen, they receive five hundred dollars to buy any necessities they might need (i.e a toaster or a suit for a job interview). They pay fees for rental applications and move in fees after a participant has

secured housing which they can afford. The program also make referrals for youth if there is a need that can't be addressed by the program. Youth are informed about the Education and Training vouchers available for youth who have been emancipated from state care. These vouchers provide up to five thousand dollars a year in college or vocational school tuition assistance until a youth reaches age twenty three.

The ILP program has high expectations for their clients in return for the services they provide. Participants are expected to be motivated to live independently and be willing to make effort in achieving their goals. Seventeen-year-old Christina Turlington, who is currently involved in the ILP program states, "This program is different. They act like they really care and they want to help us. If I hadn't started this program my life would be hectic and there would be a lot of stress. Before I started this I worried about paying for college, rent, and a car. Now that I have been going to groups I

**"I'm not afraid of turning 18. I know what to expect. I'm not suddenly going into the situation blind."**

--Christina Turlington

know that I can actually achieve those goals. I want to get an Accounting degree. I know that I don't have to just limit myself to a community college." While transitioning to independence can be challenging, there are programs out there that can help you gain the skills you need to do so successfully.

For more information about the ILP program, call (206) 749-7540 or your local Department of Social and Health Services office. 🐦

### "Being Who You Are" Provokes Passionate Reader Response

My applause to Bridgett for her piece, "Positive Power: Being Who You Are!" On a recent trip to Seattle, I picked up a copy of the *Mockingbird Times*. What an incredible newspaper. I live in Washington, DC and I can tell you that we have nothing like it here. I also run a nonprofit organization called Metro TeenAIDS. For many years I have been witness to the devastating effects of pushing lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and same-gender-loving folks back into their closets.

I know Sammy. At 12 his mother asked him if he was gay. He said he thought he might be. She kicked him out of the house! Sammy was raised in foster care and

group living homes. By the time he was 21, he could barely read, he had few job skills and he was living with HIV. It seems so obvious that his life could have had a very different course if his mother had known Bridgett.

In the HIV field, much has been made recently about men "on the down-low" or "DL", a phenomenon where men often have primary female partners but are playing around with men on the side. While an often racist media would have us believe that this primarily occurs in communities of color, the DL is far too common in all of our communities. The stigma associated with not conforming to heterosexual standards is literally killing people. ([www.cdc.gov/hiv/pubs/facts/msm.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pubs/facts/msm.htm))

In a recent issue of POZ, a magazine by and for HIV Positive people, actress and comedian, Mo'Nique, is quoted as saying, "Let's say you meet a brother and you really like each other. And he says, 'Hey, I'm bisexual.' What are you gonna do? You two haven't had sex but you're not ready to deal with the honesty. They're on the Down Low because nobody's talking to them. We can't deal with the honesty. We want to be lied to. 'How dare you tell me the truth?' So he's gonna be on the DL and tell you you're the only one."

Homophobia is killing us. Homophobia is making us sick. We need more folks to speak the truth [about] HIV, speak the truth [about] homophobia, speak the truth [about] racism. We need more folks like Bridgett.

-Adam Tenner  
Executive Director, Metro TeenAIDS  
Washington, DC

MORE FEEDBACK AND BRIDGETT'S RESPONSE  
CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

### Where are the Youth?

DARIUS REYNOLDS



**"We've created a system that punishes kids for running away from intolerable situations... this is an incredible violation of children's rights. Meanwhile, there are kids who want off the streets everyday and we have nothing for them." --Greg McCormack, former manager of youth outreach services in Seattle**

Why do youth run away? According to statistics, most youth run away to escape from physical or mental abuse; only to run to a situation that could be almost as bad. In 1999, the U.S. Department of Justice estimated that almost 1.7 million youth experienced a runaway or throwaway (A throwaway is a youth who has been kicked out of their house by their parents) episode. From my experience, most youth turn to street life when they run away or are abandoned by their parents. As early as 1960, youth were running away from abusive situations. In 1968, a study on male youth prostitution stated that most of the youth had come from an abusive family. It doesn't seem like that much has changed in 36 years, which suggests that we as a community should pay closer attention to this issue.

WHERE ARE THE YOUTH CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

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## Letter From the Editor

The Mockingbird Society presents this issue of the *Mockingbird Times* with the same enthusiasm and hopefulness that we welcome this fresh Spring season. Our youth reporters have been busy researching, interviewing and writing articles that reflect the range of interests you might find in any newspaper. Of special note in this issue is a letter from a reader expressing his views on an article written by Bridgette Siroshon in the February issue of the *Mockingbird Times*.

Interestingly, you will also find an accompanying letter from a professional who works with teens in Washington D.C. All three letters reflect the discourse that is occurring on the national stage as well as in American homes and families across this nation. Also worthy of special note in this issue is an excellent article by new reporter Jennifer Eboh, who skillfully demonstrates her journalistic proficiency. Finally, I draw your attention to the cartoon below by Echo Speed, our newly hired cartoonist and reporter. The Mockingbird Society is proud to provide these and all of our youth reporters with a forum to present to you the evidence of their thoughtfulness and creativity. Happy Spring!



Jim Theofelis

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### MORE FEEDBACK AND BRIDGETT'S RESPONSE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Dear Mockingbird Times:

I am a Christian male who buys a "Real Change" paper every week. I believe in the effort to help people help themselves and also help the poor, which I have been and still am to a large degree.

I am writing in response to an article entitled "Positive Power: Be Who You Are" which appeared in the February 2004 edition. As a Christian I believe in showing respect and love to all people, but I feel that I have to respond to this article that claimed gay people cannot change and it is an innate condition of their nature.

First of all there is no scientific proof of this statement. Secondly, many people who have lived a gay lifestyle for years have changed and live in long-term heterosexual relationships. I believe that it is an unhealthy and destructive lifestyle, and that people should be shown that they have alternatives, and I believe that God can and will help people who do want to change. I know that some people say that my views are either hateful or ignorant, but I am convinced that they are not, in fact the opposite, in any case they are my sincere views, I hope that you will print this.

Sincerely,  
Aaron Martin  
Seattle, WA

Dear Aaron Martin,

I appreciate your response to my article and I'm not closed off to your beliefs. You are entitled to have your opinions. But I have my beliefs too, and this is what I believe in. I believe that everyone has their life and how they choose to live it. I believe that gay and bisexual people do not live a destructive lifestyle; they are simply struggling to live like we all are every minute of every day. And I do not think less of them at all. I know I have been given a voice and I intend to use it to speak for all the people who aren't vocal about their decisions in life.

My article addressed how someone should not change who they are. However, if someone wants to change their sexual orientation because that's not who they are then I highly recommend them making whatever decision makes them happy. Research suggests that homosexual orientation is in place very early in the life cycle, possibly even before birth. Laura Allen & Rodger Gorski offered a similar conclusion while studying brain tissue. A scientist named Simon Lavey discovered that sexual orientation is at least partly physiological. Even in the bible it says that God loves you for you!

According to The American Psychological Association, "Efforts to repair homosexuals are nothing more than social prejudice garbed in psychological accouterments." My article was meant to be provocative, and that's the kind of response I guess I received.

Sincerely,  
Bridgett Siroshon



### Meet Our Staff

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#### Thank-You's:

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ABOUT US: The Mockingbird Society is a private non-profit organization dedicated to building a world class foster care system and improving the other systems that serve children and adolescents in foster care. The *Mockingbird Times* is a monthly newspaper written and produced by youth who have experience in foster care and/or homelessness. All youth employees of Mockingbird Society are paid between \$7.50 and \$8.50 an hour. Additionally, youth from across the country submit articles, art work, poetry and are compensated up to \$25 per published piece. The *Mockingbird Times* has a monthly circulation of 28,000 copies being distributed across Washington and the U.S.A. Youth involvement is the key to the philosophy, values, and success of The Mockingbird Society and, as such, youth are involved in all aspects of organizational development and decision-making. All donations to The Mockingbird Society are tax-deductible and greatly appreciated. No part of the *Mockingbird Times* may be reproduced without the written permission of The Mockingbird Society. All contents copyright 2004 The Mockingbird Society.

### A Mockingbird Inside Your Mailbox:

Make a difference in the lives of our most vulnerable youth.

#### I want to support The Mockingbird Society

All donations are tax deductible and all donors receive the *Mockingbird Times*. Enclosed, please find my check made payable to Mockingbird Society in the amount of: \$

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Please fill out and mail this form with a check or money order payable to:  
The Mockingbird Society, 2100 24th Ave South, Seattle WA 98144



## Positive Power: Are You a Registered Voter?

SHAY DENEY



**ARE YOU HAVING TROUBLE** figuring out the voting process? You're not the only one! Millions of people in America ignore their right to vote. With a little bit of information, the voting process isn't too tough to figure out and is an extremely important aspect of being an American citizen because voting gives you, *yes you*, the right to have your say on what happens in your country and in your state.

### Step 1: Register

Before you can vote you have to register. You can register online at [Rockthevote.org](http://Rockthevote.org) or [Getoutthevote.org](http://Getoutthevote.org). If you do not have access to the internet, you can pick up voter registration information at places like some grocery stores, community centers, some post offices, and libraries. You can sign up to vote if you are:

- A U.S. citizen
- A resident of the state you are signing up to vote in
- At least 18 years old by the next election
- Not serving time in prison or on parole for a felony

### Step 2: Get Ready to Vote

Here in America, we vote on two types of things:

- **People:** Candidates who are running for elected office
- **Plans:** Ballot measures (propositions) that make or change state or local laws

You don't have to vote on everything on the ballot, you can choose just the topics that interest you. After you

sign up to vote, you will start receiving voter's pamphlets in the mail that have information about candidates, measures, and initiatives that may be on the next voter's ballots (you should always research who or what you're voting on).

### Step 3: Vote!

Once you sign up to vote, you will receive a voter's card in the mail that tells you where your polling place is. This is a nearby location (usually a school or church) where you can go to vote on voting day. You can choose to vote either at your polling place or at home by mail.

Any voter can choose to vote at home by mail. If you are going to be out of town or will have a problem getting to your polling place on election day between 8 am-8 pm\*, then you should plan to vote by mail. This is called an absentee ballot. To get an absentee ballot just check the box on your voter registration card that asks if you would like to receive an absentee ballot.

*\*Opening time is set by the Election Commission, so it may vary from state to state*

### Did You Know?

Did you know that you do not have to have an address to vote? You can put down your local post office's address or a place where you can safely receive mail. You also don't need to be able to read or write English to vote. You can have someone get the form for you and help you fill it out, but **REMEMBER** that **ONLY YOU** can sign your form.

Now you know how to sign up and vote, so **NO EXCUSES!** Get out there and take advantage of your right to vote. It's the best thing you could possibly do. Good luck! 🐦

### What Happens at the Polling Place?

There are three main steps at a polling place:

- Check in
- Mark your ballot
- Turn your ballot in

#### Check In:

Once you get to your polling place and go inside, you will see volunteers who are stationed around the polling place. They should have signs that have the letters of the alphabet on them. Go to the volunteer who is serving the first letter of your last name. They will ask you to sign your name and then they will hand you a voting ballot to mark your votes on. If your polling place is using a computer voting system, they will hand you a card to put in the computer.

#### Mark Your Ballot:

You will then need to go into a booth to vote in private or stand in front of a computer screen. There, you will begin to mark your ballots. Remember, you do not need to vote on everything on the ballot. Vote on the subjects that are most important to you and vote for candidates that you support.

#### Turn Your Ballot In:

If you vote on a paper ballot, slip your ballot into the box provided to insure confidentiality. If you vote on a computer system, your vote will automatically be turned in after you look over it and push the "cast your ballot" button. 🐦

## Keep Kickin' it Safe

ECHO SPEED



Unsupervised. Music is blaring, people are dancing, and most everyone has had a great deal to drink. Not to mention the group of young adults who are gathered in a small room somewhere, doing everything from passing around a Blunt (marijuana), to popping Ecstasy, to shooting up Heroin. More youth than you'd think are familiar with this party scene, but very unfamiliar with what to do when things start to get out of control.

Being a teenager or young adult comes with a lot of pressure and hard work. Any young person should be able to enjoy their youth, be curious, try new things, and make mistakes that are better learned now than much later in their lives.

Many high school and college students' alike love to pull together for an excellent party where they can socialize and be themselves. There are plenty of perfectly safe situations where all these kids are doing is having a good time; hangn' out, dancing and being generally safe with a total absence of illegal substances.

The problem is that there are many more of these parties where young people are drinking too much, and using illegal drugs. I've been to quite a few parties such as this in the past few years, and I know from personal experience how quickly things can go wrong. I have my own scars that mark how bad these situations can get, and I've seen with my own eyes how easily a person can lose their life.

So how can we solve the problem of a dangerously out-of-hand party? Well, the only way to do that is by not having one. However, in reality, we all know that as long we have young and curious minds looking for a

good time, the idea of eliminating an unsafe teen party is really a very futile thought. But I do know that a big part of the problem these unsupervised parties have is that many young people (when it comes to the over consumption of drugs and alcohol) suffer from a massive lack of information. When no one is willing to call for help for fear of getting busted, and nobody knows the important steps they can take that might determine whether a life is saved or lost, bad situations easily turn worse. If more youth had the knowledge they would need to help their friends or even someone they don't know (because besides maybe learning CPR, or the Heimlich Maneuver, we've generally only been taught to immediately call 911 in an emergency), things might not turn out as ruinous as they could.

First of all, a person needs be able to recognize the symptoms of someone who is overdosing. This isn't always as easy to see as you might think.

According to [www.urban75.com](http://www.urban75.com), here are a few signs of what you should be looking for:

**Alcohol:** A large dose of alcohol will cause overdose leading to loss of consciousness and possibly even death. Even if they don't overdose, they could vomit while they are unconscious and choke - this is how Jimi Hendrix met his maker.

**Cocaine:** For those rich enough to overdose, expect them to be confused and dizzy with a dry throat. Their breathing will be erratic with short gulps followed by deep gulps.

**Speed\*:** People can collapse after overdosing on speed.

**Ecstasy:** Look out for hyperventilation, overheating and unconsciousness.

**Heroin:** The telltale signs are slow or erratic breathing, tiny pupils, semi-consciousness with little or no response. Lips and skin can turn a deathly shade of blue with blood pressure falling. Coma and death can follow.

**Poppers\*:** Can cause collapse if overdone. Poisonous if swallowed.

**GHB\*:** Look out for convulsions, inability to breathe and even coma.

**Ketamine\*:** Temporary and sometimes near-total paralysis, nausea, vomiting and heavy slurring of speech.

**Magic Mushrooms:** The risk here is from people eating the wrong mushroom resulting in poisoning. This can cause diarrhea, vomiting, cramps, breathing difficulties, black outs and, very rarely, death.

**Rohypnol and other 'date-rape' drugs:** Slurring, sleepiness, near paralysis.

I can't stress enough the importance of seeking immediate medical attention (such as 911) as soon as you start to notice the signs of an overdose in someone. To learn more about detecting symptoms and taking action with overdose, visit [www.healthcentral.com/mhc/top/000016.cfm](http://www.healthcentral.com/mhc/top/000016.cfm) and [www.urban75.com/Drugs/drugfirst.html](http://www.urban75.com/Drugs/drugfirst.html) 🐦

*\*Speed: whizz, billy, sulphate, grudge, tweek, dexys, blues, base, etc.*  
*\*Poppers: amyl nitrate, butyl nitrate, isobutyl nitrate, TNT, liquid gold, rush, etc.*

*\*GHB: Liquid ecstasy, GBL, BDO, GBH, Blue Nitro, Midnight Blue, Renew Trient, Reviarent, SomatoPro, Serenity, Enliven*

*\*Ketamine: Ketamine Hydrochloride Special K, K*

For more information on first aid steps to take in an emergency, and more bonus articles, visit our website online at [www.mockingbirdsociety.org!](http://www.mockingbirdsociety.org!)

## LOVE DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE

COURTNEY KONIETZKO



**"To me it's a matter of fairness, equal rights, and equal protection." – Bob Ferguson, King County Council Member, WA State**

According to [www.metrokc.gov/health/glb/](http://www.metrokc.gov/health/glb/), "Gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered (and questioning) people are a diverse group of people who have struggled with issues of sexuality and gender identity, and may therefore feel a sense of kinship. GLBT people are diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, age, education, political affiliation, income, and the degree to which they identify with other GLBT people."

Same sex marriage is a HUGE topic. A topic that is in hot debate right now across the United States because of marriage licenses being issued to same sex couples in San Francisco, Portland, and New York City. According to [www.wordiq.com](http://www.wordiq.com), there are currently two countries, the Netherlands and Belgium, where same-sex marriages can be legally performed. Same sex marriages are also performed in the Canadian provinces of Ontario and British Columbia. Same sex marriage is illegal in the majority of the States because of the Defense of Marriage Act, which defines marriage as a union between one man and one woman. In 1974, the issue of same sex marriage was brought before a Washington State court and the ruling was not in favor but the issue has not been taken before the Supreme Court...yet. According to Bob Ferguson, King County Council member (district two), the issue of legalizing same sex marriages will end up in the Supreme Court no matter what approach is used, it is just a matter of who – gay and lesbian couples or their opposers – brings it to the court first. According to Ferguson, Ron Sims is being very careful for this reason.

Here in Seattle, marriage licenses are issued at the county level. Ron Sims is the King County Executive and holds the power to issue licenses to same sex couples. To do so, Sims would be going against the 1998 Defense of Marriage Act and therefore against the law. Even though Sims is in support of same sex marriages, he has made it clear that in order for him to issue licenses he must not break the DOMA law.

In order for same sex marriage to become law there are various approaches to creating change. One is civil

disobedience, like the mayors of San Francisco and Portland issuing licenses when it is not legal. Another approach is to challenge the law in court by claiming that it goes against the constitution and suing for equal rights as six same sex couples in Seattle are doing. There is also the legislative approach where an advocacy group proposes a bill, gets a legislator to sponsor the bill, and encourages the legislature to turn the bill turned into law. Bob Ferguson spoke about these approaches stating: "There are lawsuits now being filed on behalf of groups trying to get a declaration that same sex marriage is unconstitutional. I think what will help that effort is an equivalent movement in the gay community and folks who support the gay community to write to their elected official, to protest, to apply for marriage licenses and be revoked and to be visible in that way. It raises the issue to the general public. A movement like that can be very powerful and sway public opinion." It seems like there isn't any one way to go about making this change happen but a combined approach of many efforts.

These approaches are similar to how African American people fought for equal rights during the civil rights movement, because both groups faced discrimination.

**"There are things in this world that are really wrong and worth making a big fuss over, like how many people across the United States are homeless or live in sub-standard housing"**

Some religious leaders and people are offended at this comparison because they see homosexuality as a choice and unnatural. Others who see this similarity believe that the law is unconstitutional and should not discriminate against a group of people because of their sexual orientation. Ferguson is in support of same sex marriages stating: "To me it's a matter of fairness, equal rights, and equal protection. The arguments that I hear against same sex marriage...our societies not ready for it yet...to me it reminds me of arguments made against interracial marriages in the 1950's."

Love does not discriminate and two consenting adults who want to make a commitment to each other to be together for a lifetime should be able to regardless of whether they're a male and a female, two females, or two males. There are things in this world that are really wrong and worth making a big fuss over, like how many people across the United States are homeless or live in sub-standard housing, or the millions of people who are addicted to drugs and the lack of community supports and treatment to serve this population.

Same sex marriage is a politically hot volcano that is going to erupt soon and we will see things change! Civil unions which are allowed in some of the fifty states are not the same thing as marriage and it is time that we are truly equal – not separate. 🐦

### 2004 Fashion from Head to Toe

BRIDGETT SIROSHTON



This fall, spring and summer have fun girls! This doesn't mean dressing up everyday, but having fun with fashion. Here are some suggestions to make your style more daring and prominent. If you're going out for the night, wear your hair in an updo with either a hair clip or a fun, friendly ponytail. For hair accessories wear your hair part up and part down with a headband, it makes you look like a Jackie O. of the 2000's. But most importantly, wear whatever makes you feel comfortable, or what you think you look best in.



Photo Illustration by Bridgett Siroshton

The look right now is studded belts; even JC Penny's and Target carry them! So if you want a glam/hardcore image you can get one for cheap.

Accessories like necklaces go with anything and they accessorize your look. The look is wearing fun light colors for spring like yellow, green, red and light blue. All of these colors will stop traffic and potential boyfriend's hearts. Of course jeans are always in anytime. Camouflage pants or capris (high flood pants) are in; the Gap and even Old Navy have them from time to time. Stripes are still very big this year (horizontal, vertical). Spring and summer wardrobes include capris and sandals and tank tops with cute and cool designs on them, because who wants to swelter in the heat with a shirt.

Black and white patterns are in this year, and if you can find a mixture of the two like houndstooth fabric, then go for it. Houndstooth fabric is in, it can make you look sophisticated and you can buy it even at Bon Macy's and at Trendy Wendy in Seattle. Handbags are in with patterns of tweed and houndstooth. Spring is almost here and summer will be here before you know it. Experiment, be daring, and have fun ladies! 🐦

WHERE ARE THE YOUTH CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

One of the main youth groups that run away are foster kids, suggesting that there is a very close relationship between homeless youth and foster care. In my opinion, many youth are being placed in homes that they are really not comfortable in or where the parents neglect the youth and they eventually run away and are left without services and guidance. They usually end up homeless or in some other unsafe situation as a result. I recently conducted a survey on youth shelters in Seattle and talked with one youth who stated that the foster parents he was living with made him and his brother sleep on the floor.

Johnny Ohta, a Drug and Alcohol Counselor for Spruce St. Secure Crisis Residential Center (SCRC—a secure facility where police take runaways) says that youth get older in foster care and realize that they have no real relationship with the family they are placed with so they leave. Ohta also mentioned that half the youth at Spruce Street are foster kids. Ohta stated that the most common answer he gets when he asks youth why they run away is "my house is messed up." Ohta also stated that he can tell the reason why a youth ran away just from talking to them for a short period of time.

In October 2003, the University Youth Shelters in Seattle changed their age range from 13-20 to 18 thru 25 because young people under the age of 17 were not accessing the shelter. Sinan Demirel, a shelter director from the University District, stated, "I am concerned about what the guests under the age of 18 are doing now, but I did support the age change at UYS (University Youth Shelter). There were very few guests under the age of 18 utilizing UYS, sometimes not even one per week." Ohta claims that one of the reasons youth stopped going to the University Youth Shelter is because youth come to the University District and see all the older youth and they realize that they don't want to be part of that lifestyle, so they find another shelter like Teen Hope or Youth Care. Ohta does not believe the government is doing a good job handling runaways. Ohta stated that the government is putting a lot of money into the Becca Bill (A law that allows police to arrest runaway youth) but not enough money into services for youth who are not breaking the law. Ohta also stated that there should be more youth shelters.

In closing, I would like to say that I agree with Ohta. There should be more youth shelters for runaways and I would love to see a better way of handling runaway youth rather than throwing them in Juvenile Detention or a SCRC. That's not going to stop youth from running away. The only way to stop people from doing something is to understand why they do it in the first place. 🐦

*"It is important to understand that runaways are not 'bad kids'. They are not running to something but away from something." (The National Runaway Switchboard)*

### Governor Locke Signs Bill Into Law!



WA State Governor Gary Locke signed the sealing of juvenile records bill into law on March 22nd. (House Bill 3078, Senate Bill 6609.) For more information, visit our website at [www.mockingbirdsociety.org](http://www.mockingbirdsociety.org)!

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