

THE PROBLEM

America incarcerates more children than any other country in the world. A study of local incarcerated youth found that:

- **91%** do not have positive adult role models in their lives.
- **83%** do not have basic life skills to resist peer pressure and make healthy choices.
- **78%** have experienced significant trauma in their lives.
- **More than 80%** are minority youth who have significantly disproportionate rates of arrests, incarceration, and probation failure.

And on average each year in Santa Clara, San Mateo, and Alameda counties, 10,000 kids are arrested. The resulting financial costs are significant:

- Local counties spend approximately **\$525 a night** per incarcerated youth, more than **\$190,000** per kid per year.
- Society pays an estimated **\$1.7 million for each youth** who drops out of school and becomes involved in a life of crime.

FLY'S SOLUTION

At FLY we believe that all our children deserve a chance to become more than their past mistakes. Dedicated to breaking the cycle of violence, crime, and incarceration of teens, FLY works with youth ages 14-18 in the juvenile justice system and those at risk of entering the system. More than 80% of our clients are minority youth. FLY's long-term vision is that our most at-risk and disadvantaged youth will transform from juvenile delinquents into positive community leaders, a community of people will support them in that process, and our local juvenile justice systems will provide more effective and humane services.

With a \$5.6 million budget, 50 staff, and 150 volunteers, FLY serves youth across the Bay Area in the counties of Alameda, San Mateo, and Santa Clara. FLY's award winning programs equip youth to alter the trajectory of their lives, creating a safer, healthier, and happier community for everyone.

FLY's hallmark service is legal education followed by mentoring and leadership training.

- **Law Program:** A semester-long legal education and life skills course that teaches youth who are involved in or at risk of becoming involved in the juvenile justice system about the law and consequences of crime. Our nationally recognized law curriculum uses role-plays, debates, and mock trials to capture youth interest and foster the development life skills such as anger management, problem solving, empathy, and the ability to resist negative peer pressure. FLY's Law Program encourages even the highest-risk youth to envision a positive future.



- **Leadership Training Program:** At the end of the Law Program, youth who need additional support to change their lives can join the Leadership Training Program. During the program year, youth complete a comprehensive assessment to identify their greatest barriers to living a crime-free, self-sufficient life. A FLY case manager/mentor then works with the youth to create and execute an individualized plan to address these barriers and build skills to sustain healthy behaviors. Youth also receive leadership training, which kicks off with a wilderness retreat that builds self-confidence, communication skills, collaboration, and positive peer relationships. Together youth in the program engage in pro-social activities and plan service learning projects where they discover how to build on and redirect their strengths as positive leaders.

Other FLY Programs

- **Mentor Program:** This program serves youth on probation in Santa Clara County, many of whom struggle with substance abuse. The program matches highly trained volunteer mentors one-on-one with youth. FLY mentors are often the first positive and healthy adults our youth have had in their lives. A subset of FLY mentors are Court Appointed Friend and Advocate (CAFA) mentors. The CAFA program, piloted by FLY and the Juvenile Court, is committed to reducing the disproportionate probation failure rate of African-American and Latino youth. In addition to providing one-on-one mentoring and support outside the courtroom, CAFA mentors are court-appointed and trained to advocate for their mentees during the juvenile justice process.
- **Aftercare Program:** This program serves in-custody youth who are in long-term detention. While incarcerated, youth receive FLY's legal education classes. Following their release, they receive up to six months of FLY case management to help them reintegrate successfully into their communities.
- **Middle School Program:** This program offers an age appropriate version of our legal education course to 7th and 8th graders. Youth at greatest risk of dropping out of school then receive case management during the school

POLICY REFORM EFFORTS

FLY is proud to be a part of a collaborative effort that has seen a 77% reduction of juvenile incarceration in Santa Clara County and a 65% reduction in San Mateo County since 2000. Known for finding creative solutions to complex systems problems, FLY is often invited to the table to participate and collaborate in local system reform efforts. We actively participate in several juvenile justice workgroups and committees.

In addition, to help our system partners maximize their effectiveness, FLY has designed workshops and focus groups in which probation youth research, analyze, and propose adaptations to juvenile justice policies and procedures.

Now, in our 16th year, FLY is committed to increase our justice policy efforts to impact local and state juvenile justice system practices. A key component of our policy work will be amplifying and engaging the voices of FLY alumni, former participants in our programs for at-risk and system-involved youth. We have taken a first step through facilitation of the Santa Clara County Youth Advisory Council (YAC) in partnership with the Probation Department. The YAC will be comprised of former probation youth ages 17-21 who will participate in decision-making processes and influence policies and practices throughout the county.

We hope this council will become a model for incorporating the youth voice in government policy and procedures, which we can work to implement in other communities.

year in order to prevent them from entering the juvenile justice system and help them successfully engage in school.

FLY'S COST EFFECTIVENESS

Without FLY, many youth will continue down a path of delinquent behavior that can result in expensive imprisonment. Yet, **for less than one-tenth the cost of incarceration**, FLY's programs spark change and break the cycle of crime and incarceration.

FLY'S SUCCESS

Sixteen years ago, FLY was designed with the help of youth in the maximum security unit of a juvenile hall. They were adamant that something could be done to prevent other youth from ending up like them. They were right. Year after year, our programs achieve consistent results. For example, last year across all programs FLY youth reported the following:



- **98%** reported that the program gave them access to positive adult role models
- **97%** reported that they now have hope for their future
- **89%** reported that the program has given them more confidence to deal with negative peer pressure
- **94%** reported that they want to make positive changes after being in FLY
- **96%** reported that after the program they are more likely to make healthier choices
- **89%** reported that they are less likely to break the law after being in FLY

Additionally on average each year in our **Leadership Training Program**:

- **80%** of our youth do not sustain a criminal charge during their program year
- **60-80%** of eligible high school seniors earned their high school diplomas or GEDs

COMMITMENT TO IMPACT AND GROWTH

In 2012, FLY was selected as one of 15 organizations nationwide to participate in the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation's three-year PropelNext initiative to deepen impact and prepare organizations for growth and scale. As a result, FLY is now equipped with a Theory of Change; a comprehensive database system and program health indicators to maximize our impact; a validated risk assessment tool that is used to both identify clients at greatest need for our more intensive 1:1 services and then create individualized plans to meet their needs; an agency-wide learning agenda that captures our learning from the previous year and identifies the questions that we want and need to answer to move forward and achieve our intended impact; and an Evaluation & Learning Department dedicated to collecting and analyzing data in order to drive real-time decision making and allow for healthy organizational learning.

Additionally, we created a vision that by 2020 FLY will expand from two to four jurisdictions with well-codified program models that maximize impact for our kids. FLY's expansion is essential because very few agencies are willing to serve juvenile justice youth and those at highest risk for entering the system; and even fewer agencies have made these youth their target population. In the past year, FLY has grown our budget from \$5.1 million to \$5.6 million, which includes launching services in Alameda County.

Equipped with our “scale-in” and “scale-up” strategy, we scaled-in to Alameda County by serving over 150 youth with our Law Program and providing 10 youth with case management. We have also confirmed our assumption that there are many youth in Alameda County who want and need FLY’s services. Alameda County has more than 2,000 youth on probation and Oakland is the third-most dangerous city in the U.S. Early indications are that the FLY model works in cities as challenging as Oakland, a key learning for our continued expansion into a fourth jurisdiction by 2020.

RECOGNIZED NATIONALLY, REGIONALLY, AND LOCALLY

Given FLY’s innovative approach and outstanding and consistent results, **FLY has received recognition at the national, state, and local levels.**

National

- 2013 - Edna McConnell Clark Foundation; selected as one of only 12 agencies in the United States to participate in their two-year PropelNext program to build organizational capacity for growth and scale
- 2010 - Ashoka Fellowship for social entrepreneurship; one of the first agencies in the United States to receive this award in the field of juvenile justice

State

- 2012 - James Irvine Foundation Leadership Award; developing powerful and effective solutions to address problems of statewide importance: juvenile crime

Local

- 2008 - San Mateo County Excellence in Nonprofit Volunteer Management Award
- 2007 - Community Partnership Award from Stanford University
- Other: Jefferson Award for Public Service; Bay Area Women of Distinction; City of San Jose and County of Santa Clara Human Rights Awards; Santa Clara County School Boards’ Association, Glenn W. Hoffmann Exemplary Program Award

