

Youth Homes celebrates 50 years!

Half a century ago, five decades, 18,250 days, any way you add it up, 50 years is a long time to be in business—and to be in the business of taking care of traumatized foster youth, is a feat to be proud of!

How it all began. In 1964, Contra Costa Juvenile Hall was tragically overcrowded, housing not only delinquent youth, but kids who were abandoned or abused, or who had run away from intolerable home situations. Concerned citizens met with the head of the probation department to determine how they could help. The response? **Provide residential housing for teens that were harder to place in foster homes than younger children.**

Alan and Joy Young, local residents at the time, locked arms with other caring community members and for the next 18 months; raised money, begged, cajoled and navigated the Child Welfare system. By 1965 they had secured \$15,000 in seed money and opened Youth Homes first six bed home in Contra Costa County. Concurrently, an effort was underway to form a Women's Auxiliary. Eventually six chapters were formed and tasked with organizing fund-raising activities, providing a source of volunteers and educating the community on youth problems.

Decades later, the Auxiliary continues its mission by dedicating time, resources, and simple acts of Love and Kindness to the youth in our care.



One of our first homes opened in the sixties

Stuart McCullough, CEO of Youth Homes for 23 years commented, **“The kids we serve have been exposed to such severe abuse and neglect. Their mental health needs are extreme.”** We have responded to this challenge in a myriad of ways. One of Youth Homes biggest successes was securing a mental health contract 9 years ago, allowing us to provide individual mental health and family therapy.

Other significant changes were made when we observed foster youth were not yet equipped for independence at age 18. This epiphany jump started the Aftercare Program which offers a variety of supportive services for young people - ages 17 to 25.

Tim McCreery, current Board Member, said it best, *“the biggest changes are the biggest challenges.”* A successful business has to react to an ever-changing environment. Youth Homes has responded over the years by developing new programs and providing a wide spectrum of care. **What has not changed is our belief that ALL children deserve to lead lives that are safe, productive, and joyous.** Youth Homes remains committed to helping them achieve this goal, each and every day.