A Sense of Home:
Connecting Youth Exiting Care to Home Supplies

March 7, 2019
Today’s Presenters

• Simone Tureck, Associate Policy Director, John Burton Advocates for Youth
• Hope Kamer, MSW Intern, John Burton Advocates for Youth
• Georgie Smith, Founder and CEO, A Sense of Home
• Tony Weaver, LCSW, Vice President of Housing Programs, St. Anne’s
• Chyenne Santini, Participant, A Sense of Home
• Marisela Ramos, Participant, A Sense of Home
Information to Participate

➢ Use the “Telephone” option to call in for better audio.

➢ Today’s PowerPoint can be downloaded from the “handouts” section of your control panel.

➢ To submit questions, click on the “Questions” panel, type your question, and click “send.”

➢ Presentation materials and audio will also be posted at www.jbaforyouth.org.
A Sense of Home

(ASOH) creates first-ever homes for youth aging out of foster care with donated furniture and home goods. Empty walls, floors and rooms, once unlivable, are transformed into fully-furnished, functional and beautiful homes in less than two hours by a team of 12-24 volunteers. Watch here.
Overview of ASOH
History of ASOH

• Georgie Smith responded to a request on social media for help.

• This initial random act quickly became ASOH:
  • Youth were trying to apply for the service with Georgie.
  • No one was providing this service.
  • Research indicates furniture is a prevention method for homelessness; a furnished apartment prevented tenancy failure.
“Change is closer than you realize.”

Before

After

“30% of homeless in America were once in foster care!”

PROBLEM

“Difficulties furnishing a tenancy can be a cause of tenancy failure.”

SOLUTION

“Providing help with furniture and furnishings is a very basic form of homelessness prevention.”
A SENSE OF HOME

1,000+ Youth & Children
400+ Homes
5,000+ Volunteers
275,000+ Donated Items
Who is eligible?

- No age restriction for eligibility.
- Recipients must be former foster youth.
- Home for which ASOH provides furnishings must be the recipients’ first permanent home.
- ASOH must be provided the recipients’ minute orders (or evidence that the youth has exited from the foster care system) and a residential lease.
What services does ASOH provide?

Living Room (Labeled Blue)

**Furniture**
- 3 Seater Sofa
- Love Seat/Ottomans
- Side Tables
- Coffee Table
- Media Console

**Soft Furnishings**
- Rug
- Throw Pillows
- Mirror
- Art
- Curtain Rods, Curtain Panels

**Decor**
- Trays
- Platters
- Coffee Table Books
- Vases (fake flowers)
- Candle Holders
What services does ASOH provide?

Main Bedroom (Labeled Orange)

**Furniture**
- Small Dresser / Media console
- Queen bed frame (unless request for King)
- Queen mattress (unless request for King)
- Occasional Chair/Ottoman
- 2 Side Tables
- Low Book Shelf

**Soft Furnishings**
- Queen Bed Linens (Sheet Set, Comforter, Comforter Cover, Pillows, Pillowcases)
- Lamp(s)
- Rug
- Throw Pillows
- Mirror
- Art
- Curtain Rods, Curtain Panels

**Decor**
- Trays
- Platters
- Coffee Table Books
- Vases (fake flowers)
- Candle Holders
What services does ASOH provide?

Child’s Bedroom (Labeled Beige)

**Furniture**
- Twin Bed and Mattress
- Dresser
- Toy Storage
- Occasional Chair/Ottoman
- Kid’s Furniture (Table & Chair)

**Soft Furnishings**
- Bedding (including: sheet set, pillows, pillowcases, and duvet)
- Throw Pillows
- Mirror
- Art
- Curtain Rods, Curtain Panels

**Decor**
- Books
- Toys
- Bike
- School Supplies
What services does ASOH provide?

**Kitchen (Labeled Green)**

**Furniture**
- Dining Table for 4
- 4 Dining Chairs
- Shelving
- Kitchen Art

**Appliances***
- Refrigerator
- Stove
- Microwave
- Blender
- Toaster Oven
- Coffee Maker

**Cooking Kit**
- utensil set (Tongs, Whisk, Spatula, Ladle, Turner, Wooden Spoon, Pasta Fork), Utensils holder, salad servers, scissors, peeler/parmesan shaver, can opener, small cutting knife, medium size cutting knife, bread knife, baking dish, 2x pots, 2x pans, 2x cutting board, 1x strainer, 6x mason jars, set of Tupperware

**Eating Kit**
- 6x knives, 6x fork & 6x spoon set, utensil drawer holder, wash cloths, napkins & place mats, 4x platters, 4x salad or fruit bowls, 4x glass bowls for mixing, 6x dinner plates, 6x salad plates, 6x cereal bowls, 6x drinking glasses, 6x coffee cups
What services does ASOH provide?

Bathroom (Labeled Yellow)

- Bath Mat
- Shower Curtain, hooks, and Rod
- Suspension Shower Curtain Rod
- 4x bath towels, 4x hand towels, 4x wash cloths
- Trash Can
- Soap Holder
- Soap
- Toothbrush holder
- Tooth Brush, Toothpaste, Deodorant, Shampoo, Conditioner
- Toilet Paper
Agency/provider refers the youth

1. Agency connects the youth via email to ASOH
2. ASOH sends links to complete application online
3. Youth shares goals and needs with ASOH
4. Youth has an interview on the phone
5. Youth sends photos of their empty space
6. ASOH gets to them ASAP
A Provider’s Perspective

Tony Weaver, LCSW
Vice President of Housing Programs
St. Anne’s
St. Anne’s History with ASOH

- Since 2016
- Over 16 referrals made
- Individual apartments and 10 homes in St. Anne’s permanent supportive housing site
What is the experience like from a provider’s POV?

- It's been a wonderful experience.
- St. Anne’s resources go into securing the lease, don’t have resources to furnish.
- Fully furnished home lifts self esteem, creates a sense of permanency.
- Better outcomes in homes with ASOH than those without.
How has ASOH contributed to St. Anne’s program?

- Catalyzes positive change in participant’s lives
- Young women see their homes not just as a place to sleep
- Increased pride and ownership among recipients
- Enhanced the value of our goal of permanency
- More stability among recipients of ASOH than those without
Lessons Learned

• Small things make a big difference
• Not “take what you can get” – honors the humanity and uniqueness of the girls that we work with
• Deeper outcomes
“Best Practices” for Move-In Day?

• Flexibility
• Many moving pieces
• Volunteers with varying degrees of experience engaging with this population
• ASOH works very efficiently
Chyenne’s Perspective
Chyenne’s Perspective

• When did you get assistance from ASOH?
• What was it like to receive this assistance?
• How did you feel about the volunteers?
Marisela’s Perspective
Marisela’s Perspective

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• What was it like to receive this assistance?
• How did you feel about the volunteers?
Commonly Asked Questions
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- Do providers need to commit to a certain number of referrals?
- How sensitive are volunteers to the needs of youth and working with this population?
- How much lead time do you need for a referral?
Commonly Asked Questions

How does the team decorate the apartment in the youth’s personal style?

Do you furnish a room or the entire apartment?

Are youth able to opt out of being filmed upon walking into their new home?
Move-In Day
Move-In Day

- The ASOH Leader, team and fully loaded truck arrives at 9:30 am.
- The staff spend time getting to know the youth further and go over the format of the process.
- Volunteers and youth paying it forward arrive at 11am, receive name tags, t-shirts, & water.
- Circle and group introductions.
- The HC Leader explains unloading: (each items is color coded per room: Living Room, Kitchen, Bedroom 1, Bedroom 2, Bathroom).
- The youth spends time offsite learning about additional resources.
Move-In Day

• “Welcome Home”!
• The HC Leader walk through
• Circle share
• Refreshments and lunch
Questions or Comments?

To submit live questions, click on the “Questions” panel, type your question, and click “Send”

Contact information:
Georgie Smith, A Sense of Home
Georgie@asenseofhome.org