



## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Is the organization's name changing?**

Yes. Our new name is Women's Center – Youth & Family Services

### **Why did the Women's Center "take over" FAYS?**

This was not a "take-over", it was a merger of two healthy, strong organizations with over 70 years of combined experience serving the community. Both agencies bring unique skills and strengths to the new organization.

### **What about the leadership?**

Linda Mascarenas-Colgan, the Executive Director of FAYS, was instrumental in initiating and facilitating merger. After almost 40 years of service to homeless and runaway youth in our community, she is retiring later this year. Joelle Gomez will be the Executive Director of Women's Center-Youth & Family Services.

### **Why merge at all? What are the benefits of the merger?**

Both agencies have more than 35 years of experience serving youth and families in San Joaquin County. Both bring unique expertise and resources to this merger that will give the new organization an even stronger platform to advocate for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, as well as runaway and homeless youth. FAYS' experience working with youth, and the Women's Center's experience with domestic violence and sexual assault survivors are complimentary. In fact, 70-80% of all FAYS clients have been victims of domestic violence or sexual assault. FAYS also has licensed therapists, a resource the Women's Center did not. The merger will give clients better access to a wider range of coordinated supportive services that can help them rebuild their lives.

### **Why would the Women's Center change its focus after all these years to include homeless and runaway youth?**

The Women's Center – Youth & Family Services will remain committed to its original mission of serving victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, but with the additional focus on runaway and homeless youth. During our due diligence it became clear that homeless and runaway youth have a high exposure to domestic violence and sexual assault. In fact, over 80 percent of FAYS clients experience some form of trauma or violence.

### **Will any of the services of either organization be cut? What services will you provide?**

The Women's Center – Youth & Family Services will retain virtually all of the original programs of both agencies, with the exception of FAYS' batterer intervention program, Anger Management Classes and the Alternative Community Service Program. Clients will still have

access to all the services and programs that existed prior to the merger, for the most part with the same staff and in the same location they are used to accessing services. There will be no interruption in services and clients will be informed of any changes in the way services are provided.

**Where should we refer our clients/should we continue to refer clients to FAYS and Women's Center programs?**

Other local nonprofit agencies and county programs should continue to refer clients to the same programs they have in the past. The same services will continue to be available to homeless and runaway youth, and to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. The names of programs will not be changing, only the name of the organization.

**Will you still operate all the hotlines both agencies had before?**

Yes, the FAYS 24-hour Youth Crisis Line and the Women's Center's 24-hour Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Helplines will continue to operate in the same way.

**Are you moving? Are you closing any facilities?**

Some staff are moving to different buildings to improve efficiency and better integrate program services, but no facilities will be closing. The new organization will operate a total of 8 sites – 4 offices and 4 shelters throughout San Joaquin County.

**How will staff be impacted? Will you be hiring any new employees? Will you lay off any employees?**

Almost all staff will remain in their existing positions. Women's Center-YFS will have a total of 75 full-time and part-time staff. It is anticipated that several new positions will be created to accommodate the organization's growth. The merger presents staff and volunteers with many professional development opportunities.

**Will your focus still be on addressing violence against women? Which services take precedence— the ones for sexual assault and domestic violence victims or the ones for homeless and runaway youth?**

The Women's Center-YFS is still committed to maintaining the Women's Center's focus on services for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, while carrying on FAYS' legacy of serving homeless and runaway youth. No services or programs will be compromised. Since there are many intersections to working with survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and homeless/runaway youth, the focus will run deeper in our intervention and outreach efforts in the community.

**How the organization will be able to give equal attention to all of the programs that each agency has operated individually?**

The organization is retaining virtually all staff, so the resources, leadership, commitment and knowledge that each program had before will be retained. Programs will continue without interruption. Great attention is being given to our integrated approach to become not only stronger in our delivery but more comprehensive in outreaching to the community.