

Action for Impact Team 2021-22

Chris Bicknell

Executive Director, *New Beginnings, Inc.*

Lewiston, ME

Chris Bicknell is the Executive Director of the only agency in Maine focused exclusively on serving runaway and homeless youth, New Beginnings. Chris is also a founding member and the current Chair of the Maine Homeless Youth Provider Group, is on the board of the Maine Balance of State Continuum of Care, is a member of the Maine Child Welfare Advisory Panel and is a John T. Gorman Foundation Fellow.

Kelli Foster

Program Manager, *Children's Home Society of Florida - Statewide*

Pensacola, FL

Kelli Foster has over 15 years of experience supporting children and families suffering adversity. She serves with lived experience, becoming a parent at age 15 years old, as a front-line worker, and now in a management capacity. Kelli currently is the Program Manager of Street Outreach Program and Transitional Living Programs where she not only manages but implements new programs and works toward sustainability when there are funding losses.

Bellis Furlin

Youth Catalyst Team Consultant, *Youth Collaboratory*

Bloomington, IL

Bellis grew to understand several systems are meant to be for the betterment of children's lives but often partially/completely fail them, from her own and her friend's experiences. Eventually, they became a runaway youth, almost completely cutting off their family, for the sake of finding a new life founded in mental health awareness, self-love, self-acceptance and happiness. They are excited to continue improving welfare systems so others can escape toxic or abusive households.

Samantha Gillis

Chief Program Officer, *National Runaway Safeline*

Chicago, IL

Sam oversees programs for the National Runaway Safeline. Sam has over a decade of experience serving youth and adult survivors of sexual exploitation and other vulnerable populations via her work with three national crisis hotlines, including extensive experience supporting human trafficking and missing persons investigations. Previously working for NCMEC and the National Human Trafficking Hotline, Sam is passionate about preventing trafficking among runaway and homeless youth.

Joli Guenther

Executive Director, Wisconsin Association for Homeless & Runaway Services (WAHRS)
Portage, WI

Joli Guenther, LCSW, has over 20 years of experience working with Wisconsin agencies and supporting their collaboration in serving youth experiencing homelessness at local, State, and National levels. As the current Executive Director of WAHRS, she directs policy and advocacy efforts improving collaboration and service provision and works directly with FYSB multi-site projects to support accountability, training, program improvements, and collaboration in service provision. Diverse service experience includes tribal reservations, rural areas, and urban projects.

Maddox Guerilla

Youth Catalyst Team Consultant, Youth Collaboratory
Bronx, NY

Maddox Guerilla is a visionary from NYC who believes in the idea of Protopia the idea that every day we work towards the world we want to see. A local and national advocate/ consultant with over 7 years of experience. They are an expert in design thinking, community resilience and innovations among many other things.

Amba Johnson

Director, Covenant House California
Oakland, CA

Amba Johnson has been working with High Risk and Trafficked Youth for over 20 years. Her work is informed by her experience in the sex industry in her early adult years as well extensive experience as a direct service provider. Amba Johnson, Director of DreamCatcher Youth Services is a subject matter expert, trainer, advocate and consultant for other agencies, police, and community organizations developing their programs preparing as service providers to homeless and trafficked youth.

Megan Johnson

Program Specialist, National Center for Homeless Education
Browns Summit, NC

Megan Johnson is a Program Specialist with the National Center for Homeless Education, providing technical assistance to communities both urban and rural who have been awarded grant funds on behalf of the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program. Megan is based out of the Seattle area. She has done extensive research on the McKinney Vento Act and worked in the space of homeless education for the past 4 years.

Shavon Maliro

Case Manager, Youth Services Bureau of St. Joseph County
Mishawaka, IN

Being able to be a part of the committee, being homeless is something as a mother has been a part of my story. Being a case manager and working within the community and learning from others within the system or whatever their circumstance has been has helped me see things from a different light. At this time, I am continuing my education to continue to be better as a person and as a parent.

Lisa Miller

Director of Youth Services, *Homeless Youth Connection, Inc.*
Scottsdale, AZ

Lisa Miller serves as the Director of Youth Services at Homeless Youth Connection. Her professional experience includes over thirty years working in non-profit and behavioral health agency environments. She is currently responsible for overseeing the HYC youth programming, including the Host Family TLP. She holds a master's in Rehabilitation Counseling and independent licensure. Her passion for serving youth and families has spanned throughout her career in leadership roles, creating, developing, and executing vision through collaboration.

Kristen Patterson

Shelter Director, *New Morning Youth and Family Services, Inc.*
Placerville, CA

Kristen Patterson is the Shelter Director of a children's shelter in California. She was a CSEC youth and teen mom who was able to spend her career working with at-risk youth. She started her career in Contra Costa County Probation. She is the former president of PFLAG, and currently sits on the Child Abuse Prevention Council, the Commission on Youth and Families, the PFLAG board and the El Dorado County Continuum of Care to address homelessness.

Christa Price

Senior Program Director, *True Colors United*
New York, NY

Christa received her MSW from the Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College community organizing program in 2015. Since then she has been committed to advancing social justice and promoting social reform through macro social work and policy advocacy. At True Colors United, Christa works primarily on integrating technology solutions into our programmatic work. Prior to school she spent two years in working in China with the Peace Corps.

Shanta Rice

SR. Project Manager, *Ambassadors For Christ Youth Ministries, Inc.*
Pine Bluff, AR

Shanta Rice is a passionate youth advocate who currently serves as the SR. Project Manager at AFC Youth Ministries of Arkansas. Since 2017, Shanta & AFC have provided youth with effective programming and access to tools and resources needed to live a healthy independent life. Shanta has spoken to over 150 organizations, groups, coalitions, churches and schools on the issues of RHY clients and available RHY programs in the Southeast Arkansas area.

EJ Velez

Young Adult Member
Reading, PA

EJ is a legally blind trans male who at seventeen became homeless. Since then he has finished high school. Currently a sophomore this coming fall 2021 at Kutztown University, EJ is studying to become a social worker and have a minor in Spanish.