

Annual Report 2015



**FIRST PLACE
FOR YOUTH** 
MORE IS POSSIBLE

within reach



At 18, seeing a bright future can be hard if you are on your own. First Place for Youth supports our young people to make sure success is within reach.

Do you remember how it felt to be approaching your 18th birthday?

When we think back on our own lives, it's easy to understand why the brink of adulthood is such an important time. Turning 18 means we're at a crossroads — trying to figure out who we are and exploring where we belong in the world.

It's a time that isn't easy to navigate. For many of us, our parents were there when we needed a safety net. But at First Place for Youth, our young people don't have that family support to fall back on. We're there to guide them so they don't have to go it alone—a role we continue to hold dear, year after year.

When young people come to us they're simply trying to survive. We help them get their basic needs met so they can start striving — setting goals for the future. And when we help them meet their goals to pursue education and good jobs, they end up thriving — as productive and responsible adults.

As First Place prepares to celebrate our own 18th birthday, we too are beginning to truly thrive. In 2015, we had the honor of being one of five Bay Area organizations to receive a Super Bowl 50 Fund Game Changer grant — funding that's allowed us to expand our services into Santa Clara County.

We also doubled the number of young people in our Los Angeles program and opened our first housing site in San Francisco.

And while serving more young people is critical to our mission, we never lose sight of the importance of continuing to improve our existing programs. This year we began testing a new housing model in Alameda, which offers a block of apartments clustered together with on-site services and 24/7 support staff. Our data told us some of the youngest people we serve (those just turning 18) needed this additional intensive support, and so far, it's showing extremely positive results. Young people who have lived there are better able to bridge their transition to independence.

As we wrap up another stellar year, so much feels within reach: the bright future of our young people, the ability to keep expanding our impact, and the growing community of people, like you, who stand with us to ensure that we never have to let a young person down. **Thank you for your support.**



Support

within reach



Angelica's Story: On the Right Path

I'm 19. I haven't been on my own for long, but things have been tough.

When I was turning 18, I was experiencing a lot of drama in my life, and the people around me weren't supportive. I needed to get away. I dropped out of high school. I was living on the streets and couch surfing.

When I first heard about First Place for Youth, I realized I might finally be able to be stable. I've only been in the First Place program for about two weeks, but things are already better. I'm living in an apartment with on-site services right now. It's just temporary, but it feels good to lie down in my own bed. I'm finally settling in after being all over the place for so long.

I've always needed supportive, positive people around me so I have somebody to look up to. Now it feels like I have that for the first time.

First Place helps motivate me. They help me think about my goals. In this past year, it felt like I let all of my goals go. I was so close to graduating from high school when I dropped out. But I feel like I'm working my way back up now.

I want to be a Certified Nursing Assistant. In my first two weeks, First Place helped me enroll in a GED program so that I can work towards that. It feels good to feel like I have a purpose, like I can do something. The things I am doing right now felt too hard before, but now I'm doing it, and it feels easier with their support.

I feel like I'm on the right path.

"The things I am doing right now felt too hard before, but now I'm doing it, and it feels easier with their support." —ANGELICA

Shane's Story: Striving for Goals

I don't really know where I would be if it wasn't for First Place for Youth.

My mother passed away from cancer two weeks before I turned 18. Without anyone else in my life, I knew I was going to be on my own. All I could think about was where I might end up next, and I was almost positive that I would end up on the street.

Instead of looking toward my adulthood, I had to focus on getting a roof over my head and finding my next meal. When I was younger, I had thought about being an attorney, but it didn't seem like a real possibility for me.

First Place helped me overcome my fear of the unknown, and now I have a clear mindset about what I want to do and how I'm going to do it. In meetings with my First Place team, we sat down and planned things out — they helped me set my goals, and now I see myself actually becoming successful.

I'm in school at Merritt College finishing up with my paralegal certificate, and next year I'll be transferring to Cal State East Bay for their pre-law program.

As a dad, it makes me feel good about myself to know that I can provide for my child and give her the things that I didn't have growing up. My daughter is three now, and she's in the stage where she asks "why" about everything. She loves it when we go to the park together, and she never gets tired of me catching her at the bottom of the slide.

When I got my apartment with First Place's help, the first thing I did was go out and buy a bunch of toys for her play area. She was so excited — we set up her area together and hung the Frozen movie posters above her bed. It means so much to me to be able to not just be there for her, but to create a home for her.

After what I went through growing up, First Place was the first real positive force in my life. Now I know I'm on the right track to meet my goals, and I have confidence in myself to get there. **First Place has allowed me to become the man I want to be.**



"First Place helped me overcome my fear of the unknown, and now I have a clear mindset about what I want to do and how I'm going to do it." —SHANE



Sonia's Story: Personal Growth

First Place for Youth gave me all of the tools I needed to become independent.

Not only did they help me get on my feet financially and with an apartment, but more importantly, they gave me moral support, guidance, and positive input. It was really the first time for me that I got any of those things in my life.

When I was turning 18, I was scared. I remember not knowing where I'd be in a few months. It felt like every door I tried to open closed on me. But I contacted First Place, and in my orientation on the first day, my fear went away, and I was excited. I started thinking about everything that was possible for me: the opportunity to be a good mother, go to school, get a job, and have a stable platform in life.

People from First Place have driven me to job interviews that I was sure I'd have to miss from not having transportation. When I fell behind on rent, my First Place team planned a meeting with my landlord to come up with a payment plan so I wouldn't get kicked out. It was so powerful to have people who genuinely care about me -- that I could never disappoint, no matter what. I didn't know how good people could actually be until I met my First Place

team. They have changed my whole outlook on the kinds of relationships it is possible to have with people.

And they helped me grow as a person. I used to have issues with anger and letting my emotions control me. But through First Place, I have learned to clear my head when I'm upset. I've learned to be more humble.

In the past, my emotions sometimes got me into trouble at work, but in my job at Safeway, I began to let my work speak for itself. I made sure my manager knew he could count on me, and when an opportunity opened up to manage a department in a new store, he recommended me for it and I got the job, along with a raise!

Normally, your parents are responsible for giving you a platform to set you up for success. For foster youth, First Place is that platform. I think that without it, there would be a lot of people that wouldn't be able to see a future.

When I think about my life and where I am, I don't just thank God, I also thank First Place for Youth. **Without them, I wouldn't have made it this far.**

"Normally, your parents are responsible for giving you a platform to set you up for success. For foster youth, First Place is that platform." —SONIA

Success

within reach

In 2015, First Place supported 464 young people with moving into safe, stable homes and served a total of 1,632 youth in five California counties. Data from the last fiscal year shows that:

While 40% of the nation's former foster youth experienced homelessness by age 19,

83%
of First Place youth have a stable home.

While fewer than 50 percent of the nation's foster youth finish high school,

80%
of First Place youth earned their high school diploma or GED, or were actively enrolled in school.

While only 10 percent of the nation's eligible foster youth enroll in college after high school,

91%
of eligible First Place youth attended college.

While only 29% of California's foster youth find jobs in the first two years after leaving foster care,

86%
of First Place youth obtained employment.

Revenue

Government	11,925,017
Foundation, Corporate, Individuals	3,951,259
Donated/Miscellaneous	47,823
Total Revenue	15,924,099

Expenses

Program	13,974,848
General/Administration	1,459,361
Fundraising	582,951
Total Expenses	16,017,160

Statement of Financial Position

Current Assets	4,435,344
Fixed Assets	720,989
Other Assets	790,346
Total Assets	5,946,679
Total Liabilities	1,821,661
Equity	4,125,018
Total Liabilities and Equity	5,946,679



**FIRST PLACE
FOR YOUTH**
MORE IS POSSIBLE

First Place for Youth Board of Directors

Michael Conn

Kappy Dye, Board Treasurer

Jennifer Friedman

Eliza Greenberg

Robin Johansen

Steven LaFrance, Board Chair

Georgia Lorenz

Andrew Monach

Keith Shultz, Board Vice Chair

Jay Stowsky

John Wagner

Hilda West, Board Secretary

Thomas Wilson

FIRSTPLACEFORYOUTH.ORG