

Zach's Place: A Runaway and Homeless Youth Emergency Shelter Program Details

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Safe Harbor's Runaway/ Homeless Youth (RHY) Emergency Shelter, Zach's Place, provides for the immediate needs of runaway and homeless youth. The goals of Zach's Place are to improve and enhance the safety, wellbeing and self-sufficiency of the youth served, to assist runaway and homeless youth with building permanent connections with caring adults, reunite youth with their families and help these youth avoid engagement with agencies such as child welfare, law enforcement and juvenile justice. The program maintains Safe Place sites, which offer access to immediate help and safety.



Zach's Place serves as a safe haven for runaway, abused, and homeless youth in Glynn and surrounding counties. The mission of Zach's Place is to reduce trauma and incidents of crisis, while increasing emotional and physical stability, for children victims. Safe Harbor is licensed by the state of Georgia to operate a long-term child caring institution (CCI). Zach's Place guarantees that unaccompanied youth have access to emergency shelter 24-hours a day. The intake process provides for primary crisis response. Parents/ guardians or local government authorities are notified within 24 to 72 hours of arrival. An intake assessment is performed by a Human Service Professional (HSP).

SCOPE OF SERVICES

Population served: The shelter is licensed for children from birth to age 17. The program serves abused, neglected, homeless and runaway youth, who are in crisis and/or needing temporary placements.

Settings: In May 2018, the original home for Safe Harbor was renovated to accommodate a dedicated runaway/ homeless youth shelter, Zach's Place. Zach's Place is a two-story home that includes eight (8) beds, two-and-a-half baths, a large living room, study room, dining room, kitchen, computer workstations, laundry area, family visitation area and activity center, as well as administrative offices for staff. Zach's Place downtown location is easily accessible to runaway and street youth, and is close to the local adult homeless shelter, a local hospitality center for people who are homeless, and an emergency food kitchen. Directions to Zach Place can be accessed at: <https://safeharborcenterinc.org/contact-information/>

Hours and days of service: The center is open 24 hours a day 365 days a year, and is fully staffed with childcare workers. Specific service professionals are available from 9AM – 5PM, Monday through Friday, and on call for emergencies.

Frequency of services: Services offered at Zach's Place are individually planned for each client, and are based on the youth's age, condition, behavior, risk and protective factors, needs, desires, and family situation, including attitude, role and potential for helping.

Payers and funding sources: Zach's Place is primarily funded through grants from the Family Youth and Services Bureau (FYSB) and Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA). Additional funding is obtained through state and local donors.

Fees: Residents of Zach's Place RHY program are not assessed any fees for services or the provision of basic needs.

Referral sources: Referrals are from the Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS); Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ); Glynn County Juvenile Court; Glynn County school system; Coastal Community Action (CCA); Lakeside Center Crisis Stabilization; Salvation Army; Amity House; and Gateway Behavioral Health System (GBHS).

The following services are provided: Youth served by Zach's Place are provided with the following services, as necessary: clothing, meals, transportation, academic support, employment assistance, family skills coaching, therapeutic assessment and intervention, life skills instruction, and case management.

Partner Agencies: Glynn Immediate Care; Glynco Immediate Care; Family Dentistry; Coastal Action Authority; City of Brunswick; HIS Ministries; Hospice of the Golden Isles; Troy University; Children in Action Sports Club; Paxen Learning Center; The Gathering Place; United States Coast Guard.

Relevant information about our Scope of Services can be found in the following resources:

- Zach's Place Runaway/ Homeless Youth Parent Handbook
- Zach's Place Runaway/ Homeless Youth Resident Handbook
- Our website: <https://safeharborcenterinc.org/zachsplace>

Entry Criteria: Youth, ages 0-17, who are homeless and runaway youth. Youth previously discharged according to program case plan may be re-admitted, depending on need of services. Youth who run away/ elope after the initial placement are eligible for re-admission, based on a mutually agreeable behavior contract.

Youth who are not appropriate for Zach's Place include:

- Actively homicidal, violent, and/or assaultive
- Actively suicidal or engage in persistently non-suicidal self-injurious behavior
- Exhibiting sexually inappropriate/ acting out behaviors
- Have a known history of arson/ pyromania
- Have outstanding custody orders
- Have active placements from mental institutions, training schools, correctional institutions or half-way houses.

Mandatory Entrance Requirement: Zach's Place is a *voluntary placement* for youth, unless mandated by court order. Youth and/or the parent/ legal guardian can refuse to assent/ consent to placement at Zach's Place, at any time. At intake, both the youth and the parent/ legal guardian/ referral agency must indicate their assent/ consent to placement. Additionally, youth must agree to adhere to the rules of Zach's Place, as explained in the Resident Agreement.

Exit Criteria: Youth will be discharged from Zach's Place when it has been determined that a safe and stable placement is available to them.

Violation of the policies listed in the Resident Agreement may result in the termination of their placement at the shelter.

As Zach's Place is a voluntary placement for youth and/or the parent/ legal guardian can terminate the placement, at any time.

Transition Criteria: Zach's Place provides an Aftercare program for all youth discharged from the shelter, which includes follow-up with youth and their family members, at 24 hours, 30 days, 90

days, 6 months, and 1 year after discharge by the Aftercare Case Manager to facilitate a positive transition to the placement.

Continuums of care services are offered, when appropriate including referring youth and/or their family to specialized services in the community, including, but not limited to, Safe Harbor Center's Street Beat and/or STRIVE Transitional Living programs, as appropriate.

What happens when a client is determined to be ineligible for services: Youth who do not meet the admission criteria for Zach's Place are referred to placement resources outside our organization, including a safe and stable relative placement, the Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) and the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), as well as other shelter/ childcare facilities. Our staff's awareness of local community resources, in the coastal health district, has developed Safe Harbor's active involvement with partnerships with other service entities and area businesses.

Service Delivery Model: Zach's Place's overarching premise is that of providing individualized case management, support, and intervention services to meet the needs of each youth within our care, with the consent of the parent/ legal guardian, and the assent of the youth. All service provision is based on a person-centered philosophy, such that service needs are developed and titrated utilizing input from youth, their parents/ caregivers/ referral source, service providers, staff, and other stakeholders. Zach's Place staff are certified and trained using the evidence-based Residential Child and Youth Care Practitioner (RCYCP) program, which emphasizes facilitating a strength-based approach, youth empowerment and involvement, attachment and relationship development, trauma-informed care, and resource collaboration.

For additional information please contact:

Dr. Sherzine McKenzie
2215 Gloucester Street
Brunswick, GA 31520
Phone: (912) 342-7069