

Emergency Shelter

Where Change Begins

Our **Emergency Shelter** program provides immediate help to youth and families experiencing crisis situations. When families come to us, they're usually at their wit's end—parents are frustrated and children don't know where to turn. Our staff is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for teens and their families who need help negotiating the often challenging road from childhood to independent adult life.

In business for nearly 20 years and with shelters in Riverside and Thousand Palms, Operation SafeHouse is well equipped to handle runaway, homeless and other youth in crisis. Teens who don't know where else to go are always welcome at our shelters—all they have to do is show up.

Parents who are interested in early intervention are encouraged to call us to set up a screening for their child. At the screening, they meet with a Marriage and Family Therapist who tells them more about what they can expect to receive from our holistic approach and listens to the struggles they're having.

Finally, a sense of relief...of hope.

After being admitted to our program, the teen participates in a structured, 21-day program that gives them and their families hope that things CAN get better—trust CAN be rebuilt, lines of communication CAN be reopened. They see a therapist on a daily basis, participate in group therapy with other clients and receive the daily structure and support they need to make a start at resolving the family conflicts they're having.

We involve parents every step of the way. They attend weekly family counseling sessions and are encouraged to participate in parenting classes both while their child is in the program and after they graduate.



**We're here for families in crisis,
every hour of every day.**

Riverside Emergency Shelter
9685 Hayes St.
Riverside, CA 92503
(951) 351-4418

Thousand Palms Emergency Shelter
72-710 E. Lynn St.
Thousand Palms, CA 92276
(760) 343-3211

Substance Abuse Program

Planting the Seed

We realize teens today are facing enormous challenges. It seems as though there's never been a more difficult time to grow up. So many teens are dealing with issues relating to substance use/abuse. Many have begun to "experiment," others already have serious addiction problems.

Operation SafeHouse's **Substance Abuse Program** helps teens address these issues in a safe and secure environment. It's tailored specifically to the issues that are experienced as a result of drug and alcohol use/abuse. Teens are admitted to our Emergency Shelter Program in Thousand Palms and participate in the program just like every other client—but they get something extra. They get special attention to help them work through their substance abuse issues.

Some of the additional services teens in our **Substance Abuse Program** receive are:

- Daily AA/NA meetings.
- Individual counseling designed to address their substance abuse issues.
- Group therapy sessions where they get a chance to discuss their struggles with their peers.
- Family Counseling that helps their family learn to support their efforts toward recovery.

For more information about our
Substance Abuse Program, please call:

Shawn Johnson

(760) 343-3211

or go to

www.operationsafehouse.org



Independent Living Programs

Building Futures



For those youth who may need long-term treatment and support, we offer two options. Our **Independent Living Program (ILP)** and our **Main Street Transitional Living Program (TLP)**.

Our **Independent Living Program (ILP)** for boys age 16 up to the age of 18 is located at our Thousand Palms Shelter and offers them the tools they need, like education and employment assistance and life-skills training, to transition into the world of adulthood.

Our **Main Street Transitional Living Program (TLP)** is a continuation of our ILP but all homeless youth, both male and female, age 18-21 are welcome to apply. It offers youth a place to learn the skills they need to make the transition from homeless to successful independent adults.

Both programs provide *education and employment assistance*—helping youth achieve their academic goals and secure employment. They provide *individualized case management and therapy*, specifically designed just for them. Teens in these programs are encouraged to start building their futures and are provided with the tools they need to be successful, all while having a safety net to catch them when they make mistakes.

Here's just one success story from our Main Street Transitional Living Program:

Martha came to the us a little over a year and a half ago. At the time, she was working a part-time job in retail and trying to support her daughter as a single mom. During her stay at SafeHouse's Main Street Transitional Living Program, Martha (21) was able to secure a job as a full-time bank teller and save \$13,000!!! She just recently bought her first home in Moreno Valley where she now lives with her daughter. Martha is a testament to the success that can be achieved through the Transitional Living Program.

If you'd like more information about these programs, call:

Ann Miller at (951) 369-4921

Family Counseling

Real Change Starts at Home

At Operation SafeHouse, we believe in early intervention. Long before a crisis happens—before teens run away, before anything major happens—there are almost always warning signs in the home.

**Being a teen is difficult—
being the parent of teen is often harder.**

If you're looking for some help but don't think shelter services are appropriate for your child, we offer our **Family Counseling Program**. Our trained Marriage and Family Therapists are here to help you work through any issues you may be having and help everyone communicate more effectively with each other.

Some of the family issues we often see are related to:

- Blended Families
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Accountability
- Discipline
- School Problems
- Drug Use/Abuse
- Physical, Sexual or Emotional Abuse

You're not alone in your struggles. Even under the best of circumstances, being a parent to a teen is a difficult thing. We're here to help make it a little easier.

We're here for families in crisis, every hour of every day.

Fees

In order to continue to provide services like **Family Counseling**, we charge a small fee. The fee you'll be asked to pay is based on a sliding scale that is determined by the number of people in your family and your income.

No one will ever be turned away because they can't pay.

If you're interested in **Family Counseling**, please call us at **(951) 351-4418** in Riverside or **(760) 343-3211** in the Coachella Valley. Let the person who answers the phone know that you'd like to set up a Family Counseling appointment. You may discuss our fees with the counselor who meets with you at that time.



Taking It To The Streets

Our **Safe Place** program is how we reach out to teens and their families who may not know we're here for them. **Project Safe Place** is a national program found in communities all across the United States. It partners local businesses and places like fire departments and police stations with the local youth shelter.

In Riverside County, there are over 250 **Safe Place** locations including all the fire stations, police stations and Riverside Transit Agency (RTA) and Sunline buses. Any child in crisis or who needs help can access our shelter by going into any location displaying the **Safe Place** sign. **Safe Place** allows Operation SafeHouse to have "virtual doors" throughout the community so that children can access our services no matter where they are.



But we don't stop there. Each year, we make presentations to over 30,000 7th-12th grade students by visiting their classrooms and talking about the **Safe Place** program and where to go if they need help. We show them what the sign looks like and what to do if they ever find themselves facing a situation they don't know how to deal with.

In the fall of 2009, we launched an innovative new program in the Coachella Valley called "**Curbside Counseling**." It's a form of "stealth" counseling where trained staff and volunteers drive an easily recognizable vehicle throughout the Valley meeting teens where they hang out instead of assuming they can find us. Short, informal counseling sessions are held with youth who just need someone to talk to. They're receiving our services without really even knowing they are—in their minds, they're just talking with someone who cares, and that's true too.

Many street youth are fearful of authority and are hesitant to seek out services on their own. That's why we decided to bring services to them. Of course, we hope they make the decision to leave the street and enter into one of our shelter programs where they can receive additional help. But at the very least, we want them to stay safe while they're out there and we give them the tools they need and referrals if they want help.

But that's not all. We're actively involved in making presentations to the community about who we are and what we do. We attend health fairs and staff meetings and make presentations to service clubs like the local Rotary, Optimist and Lion's Clubs. We're busy making sure that the community knows about us and that families in crisis know where to turn when they need our help.

If you'd like to know more about our **Outreach Programs**, call:

Fonda McGensy at (951) 858-3701

For Parents

Frequently Asked Questions

How can I get my child into your program?

In Riverside, call (951) 351-4418 or in the Coachella Valley, call (760) 343-3211. Tell the person who answers the phone that you want to set up an intake assessment.

How much does your program cost?

Operation SafeHouse is a private, non-profit organization and is able to help families in crisis through generous donations from public and private sources. However, we do have a small fee that is based on a sliding scale. You will discuss this fee with your intake counselor at the time of your appointment. **No one is ever turned away due to lack of ability or willingness to pay.**

How long will my child be there?

That depends on the types of issues that are being addressed. Generally, our Emergency Shelter Program lasts 21 days.

What happens after my child leaves the program?

Operation SafeHouse is committed to helping you make *real* change. We know that three weeks is only a start to putting broken families back together. That's why we're here for youth and their families long after they've left our Emergency Shelter Program. We offer aftercare, parenting classes and family counseling to all families who go through our program. We want to see you succeed and we're here to support you, every step of the way.

Am I required to participate in services?

While parent participation is not a requirement of our program, it is highly encouraged. Often, the issues teens are facing include not only themselves but also their families, friends, schools and communities. Our program is more effective if all members of the family are involved.

What if my child is not accepted into your program?

While this doesn't happen often, there are cases in which the issues a child is dealing with are more than we are equipped to handle. If it is determined that your child is inappropriate for our program, we will provide you with referrals in your community and assist you with finding the help you need.

**We're here for families in crisis,
every hour of every day.**

Have more questions?

In Riverside, call **(951) 351-4418**.

In the Coachella Valley, call **(760) 343-3211**.

www.operationsafehouse.org

Frequently Asked Questions

What's it like at the shelter?

Both of our shelters are like homes. You'll share a bedroom with another client and be required to participate in all activities throughout the day including chores and counseling. Friendly staff are there for you, every step of the way, as you work through the stuff that's bugging you.

Once I'm there, do I have to stay?

No. Our program is completely voluntary. No lock down. No force. If you want to leave, you're free to do so. However, we strongly encourage you to give our program a chance and if you choose to leave, we have to call your parents or guardians and let them know.

Will you tell my parents everything I share with you?

While we encourage you to be honest with your parents about what you're going through, what you discuss with a therapist is completely confidential. However, the law does require us to report certain things like abuse or intentions you might have to hurt yourself or others.

Can I bring my own clothes?

While you're at SafeHouse, you'll be required to wear clothes (usually sweats and t-shirts) that we provide. We know this may be a bummer but it eliminates the need for a dress code and makes sure everyone is dressed appropriately.

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**www.operationsafehouse.org
operationsafehouse.blogspot.com
twitter.com/opsafehouse
myspace.com/safehouseofthedesert
myspace.com/operationsafehouse**

We're bombarded every day by negativity. We see tragedies on the news every evening. It's easy to believe that we're powerless to make a real difference in the world.

**At Operation SafeHouse,
we believe in every individual's innate
power to make a difference.**

Over the past 20 years, we have received generous help from so many people who have chosen to make a difference. Without their investment and commitment to what we do, we couldn't continue to help families in crisis. We need your help so that we can help them and there are so many ways you can get involved.

We're here for families in crisis, are you?

Spread the Word

The best way to get the word out? Tell five of your friends—they tell five of their friends who tell five of their friends...and before you know it, everyone is involved. Tell your friends and family about what we do, you never know when one of them might need our help.

Volunteer

We're always looking for volunteers. Some of the positions available include:

- Leading activities like arts and crafts, sports or life-skills.
- Office work
- Grounds keeping
- Board of Directors
- Event Coordinators
- Marketing
- Mentoring

Monetary Donations

Of course cash is helpful too. It takes about 2 million dollars each year to run our three facilities. Remember, most of the teens and families who come to us don't have the money to pay for our services. They're desperate for our help but don't have the resources to pay for it.

It costs about \$100 a day to house 1 teen at our Emergency Shelter.

If you'd like to talk with someone about how you can get involved in helping families in crisis, please go to our website at www.operationsafehouse.org or call Jackie Moot at (951) 351-4418 or email her at jmoot@operationsafehouse.org.