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Memorandum Date: October 29, 2003
Order Date: November 12, 2003

TO: Board of County Commissioners

DEPARTMENT: Children and Families

PRESENTED BY: Alicia Hays, Department Director

AGENDA ITEM TITLE: ORDER AND RESOLUTION IN THE MATTER OF
PROCLAIMING NOVEMBER 2003 AS NATIONAL
RUNAWAY PREVENTION MONTH

I. PROPOSED MOTION

MOVE APPROVAL OF THE ORDER AND RESOLUTION IN THE MATTER OF PROCLAIMING NOVEMBER 2003 AS NATIONAL RUNAWAY PREVENTION MONTH

II. ISSUE OR PROBLEM

Between 1.3 – 2.8 million runaway and homeless youth live on the streets of America, where they are exposed to drugs, disease, and prostitution. It is estimated that 1 in 7 youth between the ages of 10 and 18 will run away; every year, approximately 5,000 runaway and homeless youth die from assault, illness, and suicide. National Runaway Prevention month offers an opportunity to highlight the community need regarding runaway and homeless youth, and to encourage all members of our community to take action. Youth, parents, teachers, citizens, law enforcement officers, faith based groups, businesses, and service providers play critical roles in keeping all our children and youth safer and healthier. We share with you the attached "What You Can Do" handout.

III. DISCUSSION

A. Background/Analysis

There is no typical runaway. These youth come from every kind of neighborhood, rich or poor, suburban, rural, urban. Many youth run away due to family dynamics, including domestic violence, divorce, remarriage, problems with family rules, discipline, or problems with siblings. Youth often

leave to remove themselves from an immediate painful situation, but with no plans for what to do next.

Approximately 3,100 youth in Lane County were identified last year as homeless, runaways, or at risk of running away. Looking Glass Youth and Family Services' Station 7 provides services for approximately 1,600 homeless and runaway youth per year. Services include family reconciliation and shelter care. 40% of these youth report physical, sexual, or emotional abuse at home. 76% report using drugs and/or alcohol.

Supporting families, and providing positive adult connections for youth help alleviate the risk of youth running away. All of us play a role. Thus, the goal of Runaway Prevention Month is to highlight the community need regarding runaway youth in Lane County and to help prevent youth from running away.

B. Alternatives/Options

1. To declare November 2003 as Runaway Prevention Month in Lane County.
2. Not to declare November 2003 as Runaway Prevention Month.

C. Recommendation

Option 1, adopt the order to declare November 2003 as Runaway Prevention Month in Lane County.

D. Timing

Upon Board approval, November 2003 will be declared Runaway Prevention Month in Lane County.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation will be completed as stated above in "Timing."

V. ATTACHMENTS

Board Order
"What You Can Do" Handout

THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, LANE COUNTY, OREGON

**ORDER: ORDER AND RESOLUTION IN THE MATTER OF
PROCLAIMING NOVEMBER 2003 AS RUNAWAY
PREVENTION MONTH**

WHEREAS, runaway youth come from every kind of neighborhood, ethnic, cultural, and spiritual backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, in 2002 approximately 3,100 youth in Lane County were identified last year as homeless, runaways, or at-risk of running away; and

WHEREAS, nationally, between 1.3 – 2.8 million runaway and homeless youth live on the streets of America, exposed to drugs, disease, and prostitution; and

WHEREAS, each of us plays a critical part in supporting families and youth to prevent risk of runaway behavior; and

WHEREAS, by continuing to increase awareness about the community need regarding runaway youth in Lane County and all taking a part, we can reduce the number of youth and families experiencing the factors that lead to runaway behavior; now therefore it is hereby

RESOLVED AND ORDERED, that the Lane County Board of County Commissioners hereby proclaim the month of November 2003 as **RUNAWAY PREVENTION MONTH**, and urges all Lane County citizens to work together to reduce the number of runaway and homeless youth through education and by encouraging supportive responses to families and youth facing the risk factors that may lead to runaway behaviors.

APPROVED this 12th day of November, 2003.

Peter Sorenson, Chair
BOARD OF LANE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Support Youth to Prevent Runaways and Homelessness

What to do:

- Youth need to recognize that no problem is insignificant. Talk to someone you trust--a parent, friend, teacher, coach or other relative.

- Parents should begin early to establish good lines of communication with your child. Set aside time to talk each day.
- Teachers can cultivate a personal relationship with students and make time to check in with them.
- Citizens can support local services to assist homeless youth, runaway youth, at-risk youth and their families.
- Law Enforcement can recognize that some behaviors are calls for help not criminal behavior. Officers can provide a listening ear and resources for where youth can go to get help.
- Faith based groups can engage members to recognize and support families.
- Businesses can understand that employees have families that may need additional support and resources they can use to help.