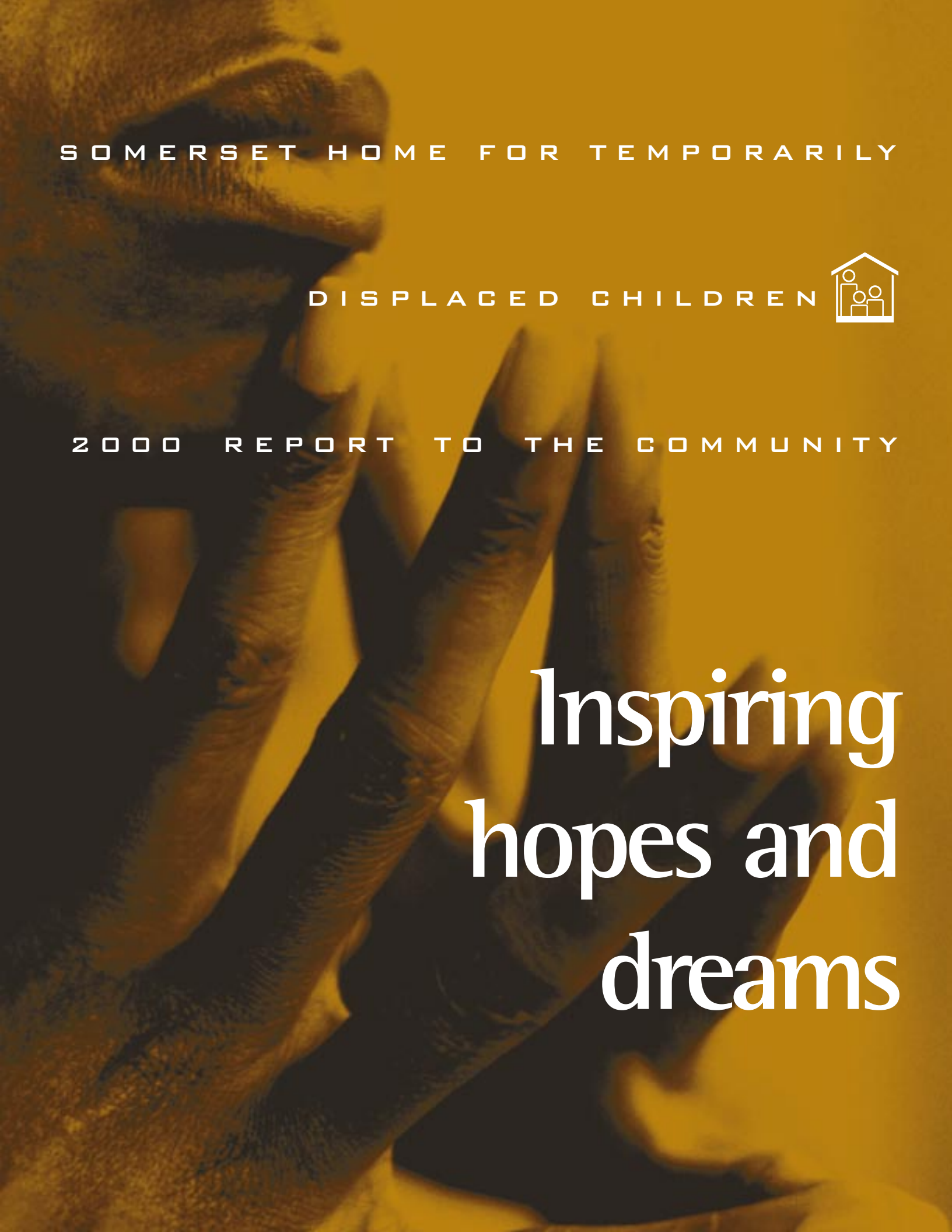


SOMERSET HOME FOR TEMPORARILY DISPLACED CHILDREN

2000 REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

Inspiring hopes and dreams

It all started from one bright idea in the summer of 1968.

The evening Membership Division of the Somerset Civic League developed an idea to create a home for displaced children. The result of that idea was the Somerset Home for Temporarily Displaced Children - chartered as a non-profit organization in 1973. Initially, it began with one program called the Somerset Youth Shelter. Its goal was to provide emergency shelter to abused, abandoned, and neglected children.

That bright idea has since grown into an organization, which now serves dozens of youths daily with residential and outreach services.

Since 1973, the agency has helped over four thousand young people, from runaways to the homeless to adolescents waiting to be placed in proper foster homes. During the 1980's two more programs, Pathways Life-Skills Education and Outreach Program and Passages Transitional Living Group Home were added. To complete the process of bringing displaced youth back into society, in 1999 the Street S.M.A.R.T. (Somerset Mobile Adolescent Resource Team) street outreach program was implemented.

Today's mission statement still stipulates that the organization provide service to displaced children, but the range of ways in which youths are being pointed towards a life of fulfillment, is ever changing in order to be responsive to each youth and his/her family's needs.





WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN 20 YEARS?

I will be a computer technician programming software, and will be married with a beautiful wife and maybe one child. My wife and I will both have nice cars living in a big house with a swimming pool in my backyard and have a nice lawn with lots of flowers.

TR – age 13

I see myself with two beautiful kids, a husband, in a big house and working as a paramedic.

NP – age 14

I want to be a corrections officer and an Olympic gymnast.

AD – age 16

I want to be a graphic designer with my own business, a house and family.

MP – age 19

I want to be an entrepreneur with my own clothing store.

JM – age 17

I want to be a stockbroker or a real estate agent.

DE – age 18

Somerset Youth Shelter and

The Somerset Youth Shelter is a short-term crisis intervention program which serves adolescents, 13 – 18 years of age, who have been abused, neglected, or thrown away by their parents or caretakers. The program's outcome goal is to reunite each youth with his/her family.

Somerset Youth Shelter services include:

- housing
- food
- clothing
- counseling
- HIV/AIDS prevention education
- basic- and life-skills education
- case management
- recreation
- referral to support services





Somerset Youth Shelter

Total Clients:	109
Average Length of Stay:	37 Days

Primary Reason for Placement

Abuse	41 (38%)
Neglect	33 (30%)
Substance Abuse	21 (19%)
No Parent Figure	5 (5%)
Throwaway	9 (8%)

Street S.M.A.R.T. (Street Outreach) Program

Street S.M.A.R.T. (Somerset Mobile Adolescent Resource Team) program provides education and prevention services to reduce the incidence of sexual abuse of runaway, homeless and street youth.

The program's primary goals are to provide youth with food, clothing and blankets while on the streets, and to provide easy access to the Somerset Youth Shelter program to get them off the street and into a safe environment.

Street S.M.A.R.T. services include:

- crisis counseling
- health care and safe sex practices
- advocacy and referral to support services
- educational and job readiness assessment
- transportation

Street S.M.A.R.T

Total Clients:	98
Average Length of Stay:	44 Days

Primary Reason for Placement

Family conflict	42 (43%)
Throwaway	36 (37%)
Abuse	14 (14%)
Aged-out of social services system	6 (6%)

MARISA – I guess my story is nothing out of the ordinary, or maybe it is. My story begins when I couldn't get along with my mother and wound up living in a group home.

While living in the group home I got involved in a relationship with an older man. I ended up leaving the program to be with "Steve". I moved in with him for three and a half months, then we broke up and I was left with no place to go.

I went to stay with friends, but quickly overstayed my welcome. I heard about the street outreach program from a friend who they had already helped. I called the first thing the next morning. When I spoke with the outreach counselor, she sounded very concerned and worried about me. Like she really cared.

She and her partner were very understanding of what I was going through. They came and picked me up. I agreed to go with them to the Somerset Youth Shelter. When we got there they gave me some lunch since I hadn't eaten in days. I felt very comfortable talking to the street outreach counselors. For once I felt like someone was really listening to me and they genuinely wanted to help me. They introduced me to the counselors at the shelter and set me up with a case manager.

Now I have a place to live (even though it's temporary). My shelter case manager is helping me reunite with my mother. My goal is to move back home in a few months. In the meantime, I plan to go back to school and get a job so when I go back with my mother, I can have a little independence (and spending money). I think it will help us get along better.

I don't know where I would be right now if it wasn't for the street outreach counselors and the counselors at the Somerset Youth Shelter.



Pathways Life-Skills Education and Outreach Program

The Pathways Life-Skills Education Program is non-residential and provides adolescents with life-skills training, outreach and weekend life-skills retreats. Adolescents are eligible to participate in services offered if they reside in any residential program of the Somerset Home, or live in the community, and are 16 to 21 years of age.

Pathways

Total Clients:	309

Primary Reason for Placement

Peer relations	74 (24%)
Lack of independent living skills	64 (21%)
Lack of employment skills	34 (11%)
Family conflict	33 (11%)
Truancy/school problems	22 (7%)
Alcohol/drug abuse	20 (6%)
Homeless/runaway/ neglect	19 (6%)
Delinquent behavior	18 (6%)
Other	25 (8%)









MARK – "But I don't have anything to put on a resume" said Mark the first time he met with his life-skills educator to begin employment assessment and training. Mark never had a job. He had never seen a resume, nor could he think of someone to use as a job reference. Mark is not unlike most youth in the Pathways program. With no job experience and no employment skills it is difficult to have hopes and dreams for the future, but Mark was determined not to work in fast food his whole life.

Mark began to overcome his fears by filling out practice job applications and participating in mock interviews. When he was ready, Mark went to the mall and went through the process of seeking a job. To his astonishment, three job offers came his way. He made a choice after careful consideration and started his first job at a clothing store in the mall. Everybody there loved him and began grooming him for a management position (but Mark had bigger dreams). Although Mark really enjoyed his job, his goal was to work in an office while he earned his bachelors degree. He wasn't sure exactly what he wanted to be, but he knew that "education is the most important thing" and that in today's world, everyone should learn how to use a computer.

Several months later, Mark completed the office occupations course at the Twilight Program of the Somerset County Vocational School. He was later selected to attend computer camp where he received his own personal computer, monitor and printer.

Now Mark's dreams are coming true. Mark will be attending county college in the fall and plans on participating in the work-study program as an office assistant. He is so proud of his resume, which now includes a work history and valuable job references. Finally, Mark is most proud that his resume now reads: experienced in Microsoft Word, Excel and Publisher.



Passages Transitional Living Program

Passages Transitional Living Program is a residential program for young men and women, ages 16 to 21, who are in need of life-skills education and plan to live independently in the community after leaving the program. While at Passages, adolescents must attend school, be employed and begin to save money, looking toward a future of independence. After a stay of up to 18 months, graduates receive outreach and support to enable them to continue meeting their goal of living a satisfying, productive and independent life.

Passages

Total Clients:	29
Average Length of Stay:	7 months

Primary Reason for Placement

Conflict in home	17 (59%)
Substance abuse by parent	2 (7%)
Homeless	10 (34%)











BEVERLY— a 17-year-old female, came to Passages in June 2000 from a home full of conflict. Much to her credit, she is the kind of person who sees the glass as half-full. She came to Passages eager to meet new people and learn. Beverly chose Passages because she believed it was the kind of place where her needs and goals would be supported and where she could obtain the skills she needed to become an independent young woman.

Beverly's first few months at Passages were full of challenges. She began attending individual therapy to enable her to deal with and reconcile differences that she had with her parents. The therapy sessions also provided an outlet for Beverly to focus on her inner-self, understanding the root of the feelings she had been experiencing.

As time went on, Beverly began to accomplish task after task. She secured employment in her desired career field of healthcare, opened a bank account, obtained her driver's license and was accepted into the local county college. Beverly began her first semester of college in September 2000. She quickly demonstrated to herself and others that she was an intelligent young woman, receiving high grades in each of her courses.

Beverly grew significantly during her stay at Passages. She developed into a more mature young woman ready to take on the world. At the conclusion of her first semester, she had been accepted into a four-year-college where she would live on campus. Her family was supportive of her plan and was proud of her accomplishments. The Passages staff, too, were proud of all she had accomplished and were confident that she was well-equipped to complete school and was well on her way to accomplishing her dreams.



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The Ruth and Peter Metz Foundation, Inc.
New Jersey Department of Education
New Jersey Department of Human Services
New Jersey Division of Youth and Family Services
New Jersey Human Services Capital Bond
Somerset County Vocational Technical High School
United States Department of Health and Human Services
United States Department of Housing and Urban Development – Community Development Block Grant
United Way of Somerset County

$5,000 to $9,999

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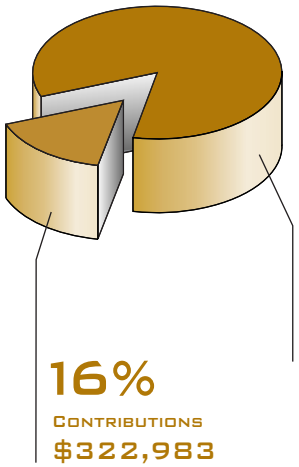
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$1,964,114

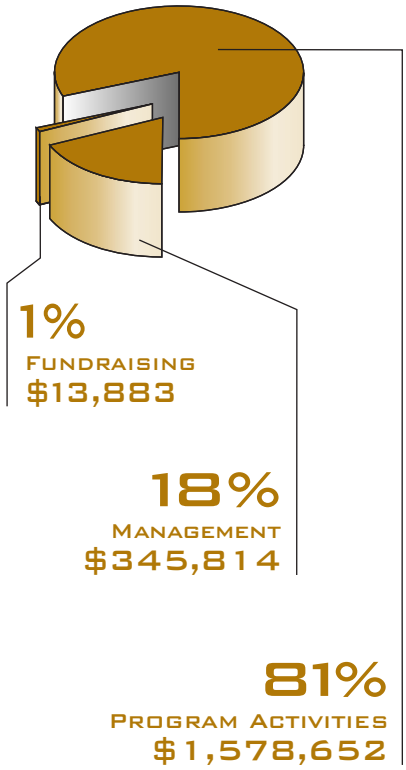


84%
Government
$1,641,131

16%
Contributions
$322,983

Expense By Category

$1,938,349



1%
Fundraising
$13,883

18%
Management
$345,814

81%
Program Activities
$1,578,652

AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST.

When we decided on the theme of this report, INSPIRING HOPES AND DREAMS, we automatically thought about our kids and inspiring their hopes and dreams. We thought about what it must be like to live away from family and friends (even though it usually isn't the best of situations at home, we know that's where our kids long to be). Then we began to think about the accomplishments we've made as an agency during the last five years.

In 1995, the Board of Trustees adopted the agency's first long-range plan and called it *Vision 2000*. This was the beginning of inspiring a group of individuals united in the same hopes and dreams. We had lofty hopes and fantastic dreams, and we are proud to say we have realized them all.

We'd like to share with you now some of those hopes and dreams:

- reduce staff turnover
- develop and monitor "outcome goals" for each program
- implement and maintain a "continuous quality improvement" program
- increase private contributions
- expand outreach services to homeless youth
- complete a $500,000 expansion to the Somerset Youth Shelter, increasing private counseling space, outdoor recreation and parking, and installing a fire-safety (sprinkler) system.

We've begun the process of charting new hopes and dreams. The new long-range plan is being called *Vision 2005*. Once again, our hopes and dreams are large, but we believe we owe it to our kids to challenge ourselves as we challenge them. We have set our sights on giving our kids the support and encouragement they need to reach for the stars.

As we pause to reflect on our recent accomplishments, we'd like to thank all of you, our extended family, for your support and confidence in us. Without your support we wouldn't exist. Please visit us in person or online at www.somersethome.org.





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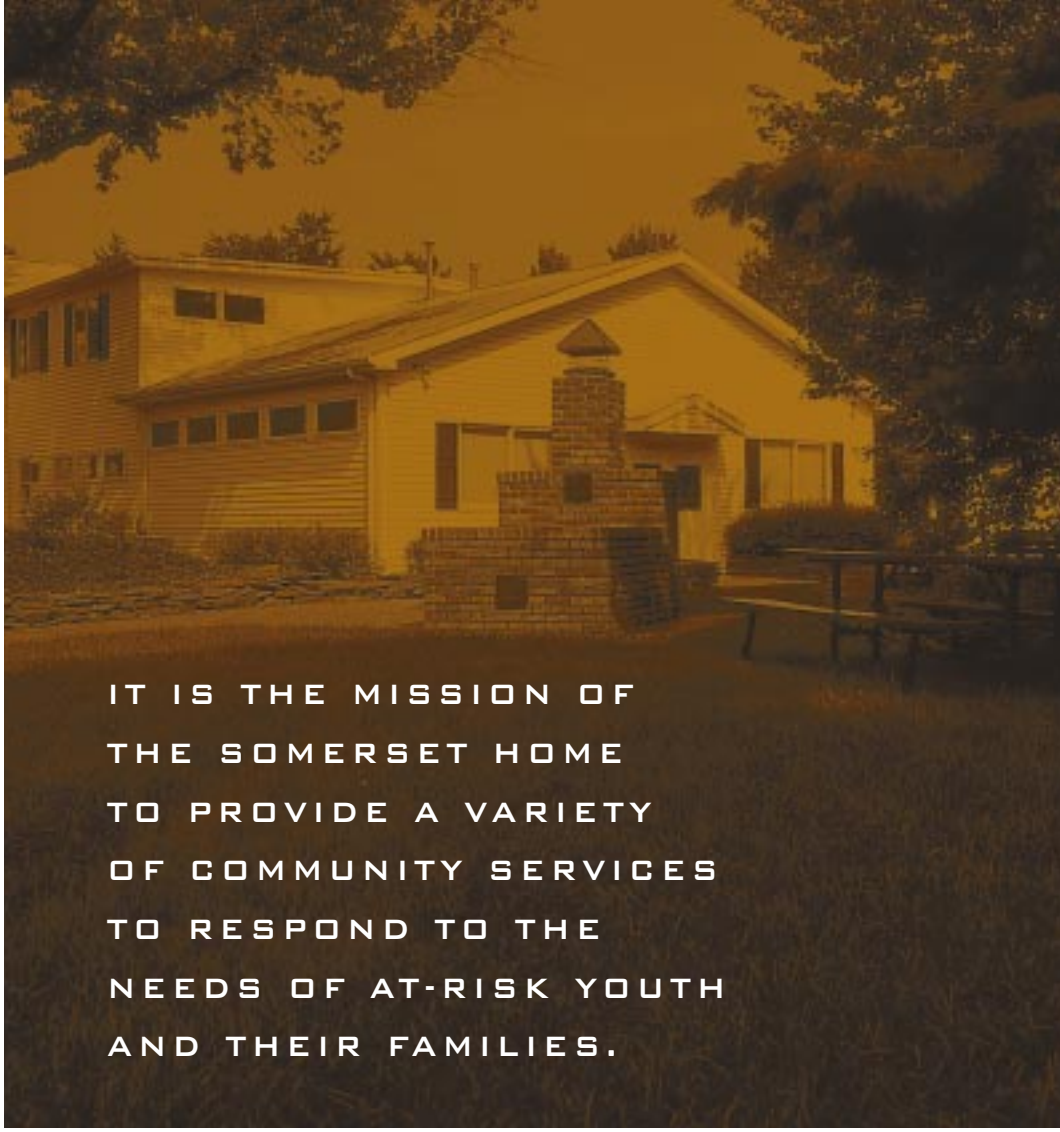
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Information filed with the State of New Jersey concerning this charitable organization may be obtained from the Attorney General by calling (973) 504-6215. Registration does not imply endorsement.

Somerset Home For Temporarily Displaced Children

A non-profit organization

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