

## Safe at Home Updates

*Amy Lawson Booth, Director, Safe at Home West Virginia*

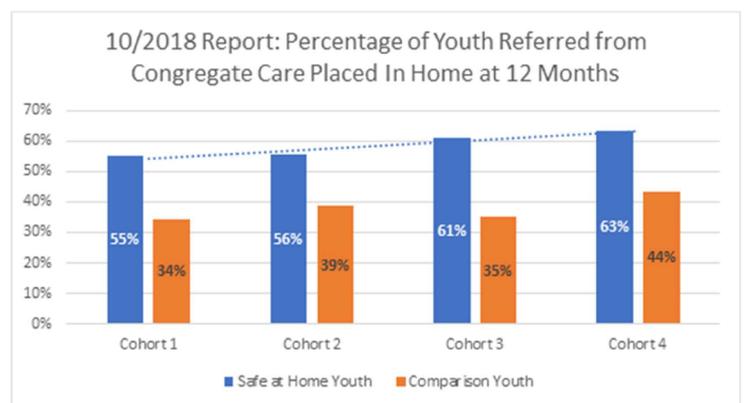
Hornby Zeller Associates, an evaluation, research and consulting firm, provides evaluation of Safe at Home by conducting annual stakeholder interviews, administering surveys, and completing case record reviews. The evaluators utilize quantitative data from the State's child welfare case management system (FACTS) and the CANS database to measure outcomes such as congregate care entry, length of stay in congregate care, maltreatment, and improved well-being.

Some of the most common successes achieved by youth and families reported by stakeholders in August 2018 interviews were improved grades and school attendance, improved behavior or emotional regulation, youth sobriety, youth taking responsibility for themselves, healthier family and peer relationships, living in a safer location, increased parenting skills and achieving permanency.

Local Coordinating Agencies did particularly well in developing high quality Wraparound and Crisis Safety Plans, where the content of those plans demonstrated a strong adherence to the Wraparound model. Fidelity measures were created by the National Wraparound Initiative and scored by the extent to which those standards were met by reviewers in each case. Overall, fidelity scores were higher than last year with improvements between initial and most recently created case plans.

The outcome analysis looks at youth in six-month cohort periods based on the date of referral. This allows the evaluative team to assess improvements over time. Additionally, youth from Safe at Home are matched to youth in a historical comparison group through a statistical technique called Propensity Score Matching. Analysis highlights:

- At twelve months, Safe at Home youth were more likely to have returned home from congregate care than youth from the historical comparison group.
- Safe at Home youth spend less amount of time in congregate care than do the matched comparison youth, and at a statistically significant rate.
- Safe at Home youth are also more likely to return to their home county than youth in the historical matched comparison group. Most results are statistically significant as well.
- When youth do need to enter foster care, Safe at Home youth are more likely to be placed in a relative home, and at a statistically significant rate.
- Youth in Safe at Home are also more likely to reunify, with many cohorts doing so at a statistically significant rate.



Planning is currently underway to sustain Safe at Home when Waiver funding comes to a close at the end of 2019, from both a program and financial perspective.

## Safe at Home Helps Youth Succeed in School

Submitted by NECCO



In June 2017, a 16-year-old youth returning home from placement (Y\*) was referred to Safe at Home West Virginia. To assist with Y's truancy, Safe at Home helped facilitate a relationship between the family and school. In March 2018, at the request of her probation officer, the teen decided to seek alternative education at the county Day Report Center.

Safe at Home's support of Y's academic journey has resulted in great success. According to her family, for the first time she is earning A's on her report card and wants to go to school every day. She is expected to graduate in May 2019.

Y is looking beyond high school into college programs. She has applied to several in-state colleges, completed her FAFSA, and has taken the ACT. She is eager to tour campuses and is considering pursuing a degree in business.

Not only is Y excelling in school and applying to college, but she also works almost full-time. Safe at Home is currently helping this family prepare and navigate senior year festivities for a first-generation college student. She has faced many obstacles, but has an optimistic outlook in preparing her future.

*\*Name left out for privacy of Safe at Home youth.*

## Teen Overcomes Obstacles to Find Supportive Family

Submitted by NECCO

Z\* was 15 years old at the time of her referral to Safe at Home West Virginia. She had returned home from placement into an unstable environment with her mother. She then moved temporarily into her bus driver's home with her younger sister. Her mother eventually took the younger child home, while Z thought it would be best to find permanence with another family to improve her opportunity for a successful future.

It was uncertain as where Z would go as there were no foster families available for a 15-year-old girl. Safe at Home helped facilitate communication between a former neighbor and eventually helped the family accept Z into their loving home. She has made great strides in working with her anxiety and past traumas, earned straight A's, found a job, researched colleges, and has established a permanent relationship with the family.

Safe at Home helped orchestrate all the needs of the family to help Z find permanency in the home. Safe at Home also facilitated visits between the siblings, which has improved the relationship between Z and her mother. In November 2018, the mother relinquished rights at Z's request for permanence. The judge issued the family legal guardianship and they signed the guardianship papers in January 2019.

*\*Name left out for privacy of Safe at Home youth.*

