

Survivor Story

"From the age of 4-16, I was in foster care due to my mother's heavy drug use. I bounced from foster home to foster home and at 16 was returned to my mother. I would run away from home every day. I dropped out of high school and I got myself arrested. I began hanging around with a friend who introduced me to 'the life.' She glamorized 'the life' and explained how easy it was to get money. She made it seem like the best thing in the world. That was my life for the next four years. I eventually got tired of it. I was burned out. An old friend of mine introduced me to STARS. That was my defining moment. I wanted a fresh start and STARS gave me that. STARS gave me strength, courage and supported me through it. It gave me the healing that I needed through therapy and the support group. Staff at STARS were incredible. They made me feel comfortable and not judged. They made me feel human. I wish I could have stayed with STARS forever, but I know there are many other girls who need their services."

- Survivor

Steps to Referring:

1. Contact Program Manager Ezak Marquez at emarquez@sdyouthservices.org / (619) 993-8050.
2. Email a referral form to Ezak Marquez at emarquez@sdyouthservices.org or fax to (619) 521-5944.
3. Staff will contact the referring party within 48-72 hours for additional information prior to contacting referral.

Join Us in Building Futures

Give, volunteer and learn other ways you can help at sdyouthservices.org.



San Diego Youth Services (SDYS)

has improved the lives of more than 750,000 homeless, runaway and other vulnerable youth since 1970. We provide safe places to live and long-term solutions through shelter, foster homes, community centers and housing. Through prevention, early intervention and treatment, we also help youth before they need higher levels of care or become homeless. SDYS serves youth at more than 100 community and school locations.

Our mission is to empower youth to reach their highest potential.

sdyouthservices.org

For more information or to schedule a presentation about our program, contact:

Program Manager Ezak Marquez
(619) 993-8050

STARS is funded in part by the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, OVCTTAC and the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services



STARS

Building futures for 50 years



Surviving Together,
Achieving and
Reaching for Success

Confidential Location
(619) 521-2250

San Diego Youth Services STARS

STARS (Surviving Together, Achieving and Reaching for Success), a trauma informed program of San Diego Youth Services, provides services for youth between the ages of 12 and 24 who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation and domestic sex trafficking.

STARS empowers survivors to leave sexual exploitation and trafficking by providing emotional support to develop their inner strengths, improve their self-esteem and identify their dreams. We promote healing through relationships and a sense of community through our client-centered, trauma informed services.

"This is one place where they do not get tired of my recovery."

– Survivor, Age 21



Our Services

Case Management Program

- Case manager helps identify goals and create support for recovery from trafficking, physical and mental health, independent living skills and increasing self-sufficiency.
- Support includes detention outreach, court representation and advocacy, health appointments, applying for benefits, housing, obtaining legal documents, enrolling in school, job searching and exercise.
- Referrals and connection to mental health care, school, health, drug and alcohol treatment and housing.

"Case management taught me how to fight for success, believe in myself, know I am smart and be proud of myself."

– Survivor, Age 19

Therapy and Mental Health Services

- Individual and family therapy offered onsite or through referral to partnering agencies for victims of human trafficking under the age of 24. SDYS specializes in treatment modalities such as Motivational Interviewing, Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy.
- Referral and connection to psychiatric care either through STARS or a partner agency.

"Therapy taught me to love myself and never give up, that I am beautiful and I can do this. They believe in me."

– Survivor, Age 19

Detention Outreach

- Services can be provided while survivor is in custody depending on location.
- In custody services include emotional support, advocacy, and establishing goals and a support plan upon release.

"It was comforting to have the same support system regardless of what my situation looked like."

– Survivor, Age 17

Our Services



STARS Survivor Support Group

- Weekly support group.
- Drop-in structure for young women who need a flexible group structure without an attendance policy.
- Counseling and peer support on relationships and boundary setting, recruitment, vulnerabilities, commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking, safe coping, self-esteem, health, trauma, recovery and goal setting.
- Transportation assistance available.
- Dinner, incentives and childcare provided.

Peer Support Services

- Using lived experience, the Peer Support Partner will offer a voice, perspective and validation to survivors and help improve social functioning, reduce substance use and improve overall quality of life.

Community Trainings

- STARS staff can provide trainings on commercial sexual exploitation and domestic sex trafficking.
- Trainings are tailored to the requesting party's needs.
- Please contact Program Manager Ezak Marquez at emarquez@sdyouthservices.org to schedule.