

NATIONAL RUNAWAY PREVENTION MONTH 2018

Toolkit and Messaging Guide



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Introduction

About National Runaway Prevention Month

National Runaway Prevention Month (NRPM) is spearheaded each year by the National Runaway Safeline (NRS), the federally designated communication system for runaway and homeless youth, with the support of the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB). The goals of NRPM are two-fold:

1. To raise awareness of the runaway and homeless youth crisis and the issues these young people face.
2. To educate the public about solutions and the role they can play in ending youth homelessness.

NRPM began in October of 2002. President George W. Bush hosted the landmark White House Conference on Exploited and Runaway Children, where leaders from across the country convened to discuss issues and challenges related to runaway and homeless youth issues. What was once known as National Runaway Prevention Week was thus expanded into a month-long prevention and awareness campaign.

Over the years, members of Congress have taken steps to commemorate National Runaway Prevention Month (NRPM); supporting and recognizing its goals and ideals by introducing both House and Senate Resolutions. Proud sponsors of NRPM resolutions have included Rep. Judy Biggert (R-IL), Rep. Ruben Hinojosa (D-TX), Rep. Jon Porter (R-NV), Rep. Steve Israel (D-NY), Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA), Sen. Susan Collins (R- ME), Sen. Orrin Hatch (R- UT), Sen. Richard Shelby (R-AL), Sen. Blanche Lincoln (D-AK) and Sen. Tammy Duckwork (D-IL).

THEME

The theme of National Runaway Prevention Month (NRPM) 2018 is “**Shine a Light.**” This year, NRPM is not only shining a light on the issues runaway and homeless youth (RHY) face every day, but also it will shine a light on the resources available to support youth in crisis and those experiencing homelessness. NRPM aims to highlight the work of runaway and homeless youth programs and how these programs and services are supporting RHY in local communities. By highlighting the importance of these resources and how youth can access these services, NRPM partners will create a stronger safety net for at-risk and homeless youth. NRPM 2018 will bring individuals and communities together to be a source of light, hope, and support for young people across the country.

It is our goal that communities nationwide can understand the importance of supporting vulnerable youth by highlighting the work of RHY funded programs and the National Runaway Safeline.

About This Toolkit

This toolkit, designed and distributed by the NRS, with the support of FYSB, is intended to serve as a resource for youth serving organizations, agencies, businesses, schools, individuals, etc. who wish to participate in NRPM. Community participation is the key to NRPM's success. For each community, organization, school, and person involved in NRPM, we become that much closer to ending youth homelessness and creating support for youth in crisis.

This toolkit is divided into four sections: ways to make a difference, events and activities, local fundraising, and getting the word out.



Staff at NRS wearing green in honor of 'wear green day' 2017

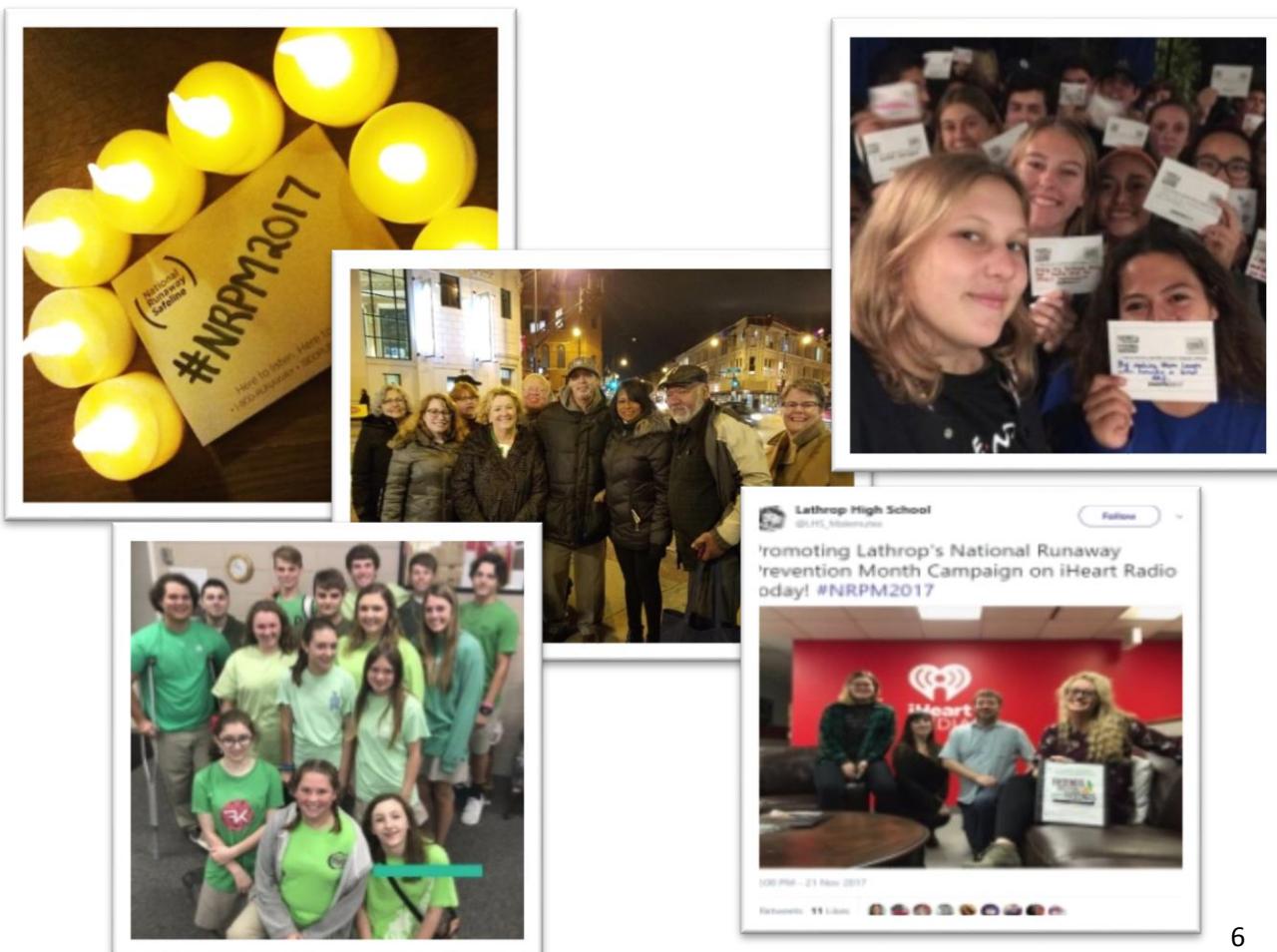
Ways to Make a Difference during NRPM

Planning a local event or participating in a national activity are great ways to show your support for NRPM and to spread awareness amongst your friends, family, and community. Planning a successful campaign doesn't have to involve a huge budget either. Here are some easy ways to be involved.

Suggested Events and Activities

- 1.) **Green Light Project (See Page 7 for Details):** The Green Light Project is a cornerstone of National Runaway Prevention Month, and getting involved is as easy as flipping a switch! Secure a landmark or building to be lit green in November. You may be able to light your own organization green! Doing so can be a great way to show support.
- 2.) **Participate in a national event (See Page 8 for Details):** Check out our national event list – there are social media days and ways to support your community. Remember for added impact, share your pictures and use the hashtags: #NRPM2017.
- 3.) **Community Presentations:** Deliver a presentation to a community group (schools, civic groups, faith based organizations, etc.) on the problem of runaway youth and the resources available. Order free NRS promotional materials to hand out at presentations. You can also invite a local expert or guest to present information – they could include service providers, city agencies, and/or youth. Visit 1800RUNAWAY.org/nrpm for a sample presentation slides.
- 4.) **Involve your local government:** Invite local government representatives (mayor, city councilperson, congressman, etc.) to attend your event or to sign a proclamation. Having a respected local dignitary in attendance can increase the credibility of your event, and bring you additional press coverage. Visit 1800RUNAWAY.org/nrpm for a sample proclamation.
- 5.) **Develop a "runaway display":** Develop a display of statistics and promotional materials that viewers can "take-away" (i.e., bookmarks, brochures), and get permission to set up your information in a busy public area. You might try a public building, a business establishment, or your school. Contact the National Runaway Safeline to order free promotional materials to distribute at your runaway display. Make sure to include information about our *Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum*.

- 6.) **Partner with a local program:** Collaboration and support to local programs is a key element of the NRPM. RHY programs are serving youth across the country. Learn about the RHY programs in your community and reach out to partner and support these youth. You can find local RHY programs on the [FYSB website](#).
- 7.) **Host a fundraiser (see Page 9 for fundraiser ideas):** Organize a fundraiser at your office, place of worship, school, or social club. The funds collected can be donated to a local RHY program or a local youth serving organization in your community.
- 8.) **Create an e-Campaign:** Tell your online contacts about NRPM by adding the following message to your e-mail signature or social media network:
"November is National Runaway Prevention Month!" or "Learn how you can create this e-Campaign by visiting 1800RUNAWAY.org."
- 9.) **Write an op-ed:** Submit an op-ed to your local newspaper, highlighting the importance of NRPM using the talking points and messaging included in this guide.
- 10.) **Facilitate an activity from the *Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum*:** You can download this free resource off of 1800RUNAWAY.org. Take a look at the Weekly Guide (pages 13-18) to see the recommended *Let's Talk* activity for the week. The *Let's Talk* is available in English and Spanish.



Green Light Project

The Green Light Project is the symbol for NRPM, and getting involved is as easy as flipping a switch, or securing a landmark or building to be lit with green light in November.

- 1.) Plan a green light event/ceremony and purchase and distribute green light bulbs in your community. Green light bulbs are available at most local hardware stores.
- 2.) Participate in a Green Light Project event by securing a landmark or building in your community to be lit green in November.
- 3.) Create green awareness ribbons and distribute them to local government officials and/or local businesses.
- 4.) Join groups across the country to wear green on **Tuesday, November 6th** or choose your own day to wear as an office, school, sports team, social club, Greek organization, service organization, etc. Take a group picture* and put it on your social media platform with the hashtags **#NRPM2018**.

* *We want to hear about your Green Light Project! Connect to NRS on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram with #NRPM2018 to share your green light goals, successes, set-backs, and results.*



Robey Hotel in Chicago Lit Green for NRPM 2017

NRPM National Events

- 1). November 1st: Facebook Profile Picture.** The kickoff for NRPM will allow supporters to add a “Shine A Light” filter to their Facebook profile picture so they can show their support for the entire month of November. NRS will make the link available for this closer to the date.
- 2). Tuesday, November 6th: Wear Green Day.** This is a fun and easy way for people to get involved and raise awareness for NRPM. For added impact we are asking that individuals or groups post their pictures on social media using the hashtags **#NRPM2018**.
- 3). Tuesday, November 13th: Light the Night.** Youth service agencies, community groups, and individuals across the country will be hosting candlelight vigils to “shine a light” on the issues and show solidarity with youth in crisis.
- 4). Tuesday, November 20th: Teachable Tuesday Online Campaign.** NRS will have current runaway and homeless youth statistics available for individuals and organizations to share through Facebook, Twitter and other social media accounts to raise awareness of RHY issues.

You can download the NRPM Activity Poster and share it with your local network. Please visit 1800RUNAWAY.org/nrpm to download a **FREE NRPM poster**.



Our partners at Greyhound Lines, Inc. participating in 'Wear Green' Day

Fundraising

*Want to support NRPM by organizing a fundraiser? Not sure how to get started?
Check out our tips and ideas.*

Tips on organizing a fundraiser

- 1.) **Know your audience:** Do your friends love to be outdoors, or do they prefer a night at the pub? Think of an activity that your friends/family/ coworkers already enjoy and use it as a way to raise funds. For example, someone whose friends love throwing dinner parties could host an NRPM dinner party, with a suggested donation and green decorations.
- 2.) **Make it tangible:** Asking people to do something specific is more motivating than just asking for “donations.” For example, asking your coworkers to all pack lunch on a certain day and give what they would have spent on lunch at a restaurant.
- 3.) **Don’t underestimate the power of social media:** While in-person events are a lot of fun, online ‘events’ may be more convenient for supporters. For example, announce to your friends and followers that if they are able to collectively raise \$100 in donations, you will post embarrassing photos of yourself from middle school. Fun activities like this are more actionable and memorable.
- 4.) **Tie the event to the issue:** Organizing a fun event or challenge will draw people in, but relating it back to the cause will provide extra motivation for people to participate. In your invitations, you can cite statistics about runaway and homeless youth or include quotes from one of the books or movies in our media guide. Reminding people where their money will go is important.
- 5.) **Show gratitude:** Thank everyone who participates, at least once. Handwritten thank you notes are a way to go the extra mile.

Getting the Word Out

An important part of NRPM is making sure we all get the word out about NRPM and its goals, as well as the projects, events, and activities that are planned during November. In this section we have put together various tips and resources to help with effectively communicating to the public about NRPM.

Talking Points

Want to get the word out about NRPM and runaway and homeless youth but not sure where to start? We have compiled some easily referenced talking points.

- 1.) NRPM 2018's theme is "**Shine A Light.**" This year not only is NRPM shining a light on the issues runaway and homeless youth face, but it will shine a light on the resources available to support youth in crisis. NRPM aims to highlight the work of runaway and homeless youth programs and how these programs are supporting RHY through their services in local communities. By highlighting the importance of these resources and how youth can access these services, NRPM will create a stronger safety net for at-risk youth. NRPM 2018 will bring individuals together to be a source of light, hope and support for young people across the country.
- 2.) Runaway and homeless youth are not 'bad kids,' they are typically good kids caught in bad situations.
- 3.) Runaway and homeless youth are not limited to urban environments. There are runaway and homeless youth in every community: urban, suburban, and rural.
- 4.) Runaway and homeless youth often do not look like the stereotype of an adult homeless person. They often try to hide their situation and therefore the issue remains invisible.
- 5.) The runaway and homeless youth crisis is a solvable problem.
- 6.) The public can help runaway and homeless youth by connecting them with evidence-based services, such as NRS and community based RHY programs.
- 7.) There is a positive return on investment for those willing to invest in ending youth homelessness. Helping a young person before they turn to a lifetime on the streets saves society money in social programs, medical expenses, law enforcement, and other costs.

- 8.) Youth commonly describe a significant family conflict led to the youth's departure or running away.

Social Media

Being a part of NRPM can be as easy as a click, a 'like,' a 'share' or a retweet. NRS' social media pages are a great resource to stay informed about youth issues and to participate in an online discussion about the issue. Throughout November, we will be disseminating data and stories, hosting a live twitter chat, and providing other useful information about the runaway and homeless youth crisis. We will also be coordinating a few social media 'events, see our list of NRPM national events for more information. Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#) to stay in the loop!

Remember that throughout the month of November if you share any pictures or information about NRPM events on social media please use the hashtags **#NRPM2018** and **#endyouthhomelessness**.

Media and Art

While data is crucial to understanding different issue areas, peoples' stories are what move us. To get people to understand the issues faced by youth in crisis on an emotional level, we have put together a list of books, movies, TV shows, and various media that effectively convey the stories of these young people. Want to get your friends and family involved in NRPM? Why not host a book club or movie night with one of the books or movies from our list? Take a look at the weekly messaging guide below to get suggested book and movie ideas.

NRPM Messaging Guide and Talking Points

About this Guide

This messaging guide is not intended to give parameters or limits to National Runaway Prevention Month (NRPM) partner agencies' content during the month of November. Instead, it is intended to serve as a resource that allows participating agencies to easily access content during each week day in November.

Structure of the Weekly Guide

The idea behind the guide is to have the messaging flow and build on itself, rather than being piecemeal. Each week will have a specific focus. The overall setup of the guide is as follows:

Monday

Mondays are for introducing audiences to that week's focus. We will introduce the audience through statistics and trends. We will also highlight a module activity from the *Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum* during this time, giving agencies and community partners another resource to utilize during the week.

Tuesday

Tuesdays are meant to highlight the National activity that is taking place that day and encourage individuals/agencies across the country to be involved.

Wednesday

Wednesdays are meant to connect the issue addressed to other issues affecting youth. For example, 'youth living on the street who have been abused in the past are more likely to be victimized on the street.' The idea is to frame the issues within a greater context, exploring consequences, and making people understand *why* they should care about the issue at hand.

Thursday

Thursdays are designed to put faces and stories to the 'issues.' Through telling stories from each agency, promoting pieces of media that address the issue being discussed, and asking people to share their own stories, we are humanizing complex issues, further making the public understand *why* they should care.

Friday

Fridays are focused on long-term involvement. National and local agencies will use the momentum built during the week to get people involved as donors, volunteers, and advocates.

Thursday November 1st: Official NRPM Kick-Off!

November 1st is the official start of NRPM 2018. This would be a good time to make sure your agency is prepared for the upcoming weeks. We will also make the Facebook Profile available for download on November 1st. Add NRS links to your website and inform the public that you will be supporting NRPM throughout the month of November.

Week One: Introduction and Focus on Abuse (11/05-11/09)

Monday 11/05

- **Statistics/Talking Points:**
 - 1 in 30 adolescent minors (13-17) and 1 in 10 young adults (18-25) endures some form of homelessness in a year. [Additional research.](#)
 - According to an ACF/FYSB [Street Outreach Program Study](#), 24.7% of youth surveyed, reported physical abuse/assault as the reason for becoming homeless.
 - Within the dysfunctional family environments cited by runaway and homeless youth, abuse is often a factor. Verbal abuse, physical abuse, and sexual abuse before the age of 18 are all correlated with higher run away rates. [Additional research.](#)
- **Let's Talk Activity for the Week:** Module 4: Peers and Healthy Relationships – “Healthy Relationships” Activity

Tuesday 11/06

- **Support NRPM by participating in ‘Wear Green’ Day!** Most people have something green in their closet; whether it is a t-shirt, tie, pair of socks, etc. Coordinate a ‘wear green’ day with your friends, coworkers, students, and/or classmates on November 6th. This is a fun and easy way to get people to learn more about NRPM.
- **Share your photos!** For added impact, take a photo of your group wearing green and post it to social media with the hashtag **#NRPM2018**. Tag NRS and we could share your photo!

Wednesday 11/07

- **Statistics/Talking Points:**
 - Homeless youth are at high risk for involvement in the criminal justice system. Homeless youth who have been physically abused are almost twice as likely to be incarcerated compared to homeless youth without a history of physical abuse. (*Yoder et al, 2013*)
 - Childhood abuse increases youths’ risk for later victimization on the street. Physical abuse is associated with elevated risk of assaults for runaway and homeless youth, while sexual abuse is associated with higher risk of rape for runaway and homeless youth. (*Molnar et al, 1998*)
 - The majority of young people on the street are not there because they want to be. They are there because they have nowhere else to go. Runaway and homeless youth are often endangered, with the risk of victimization on the street increasing for youth who have been victims of abuse in the past. [Additional research.](#)

Thursday 11/08

- **Suggested movies:** *Freedom Writers, Gimme Shelter, Precious, Short Term 12, Inocente*
- **Suggested books:** *Almost Home, Girlbomb: A Halfway Homeless Memoir, Homeless at Age 13 to a College Graduate: An Autobiography, My Orange Duffel Bag, The Glass Castle*
- **Reminders:** Prompt followers/ volunteers/ staff/ local agencies to share their own stories or additional pieces of media on social media.

Friday 11/09

- **Call to action nationally:** Learn more about runaway and homeless youth across the country at 1800RUNAWAY.org and learn about agencies working with runaway and homeless youth in your area. Check out our [9 easy ways to make a difference during NRPM](#).
- **Call to action locally:** Get involved through volunteering, donating, and/or advocating. Local agencies to highlight upcoming fundraisers, volunteer opportunities, etc.

Week Two: Trafficking (11/12-11/16)

Monday 11/12

- **Statistics/Talking Points:**
 - According to ACF/FYSB [street outreach program data study](#), Almost one-quarter of participants (24.1%) said that they had “agreed to be sexual” with someone in exchange for money, and 27.5 percent had “agreed to be sexual” with someone in exchange for a place to spend the night.
 - Of the nearly 25,000 runaways reported to [NCMEC](#) in 2017, one in seven were likely victims of child sex trafficking.
- **Let's Talk Activity for the Week:** Module 6: Runaway Reality – “Runaway Risks” Activity.

Tuesday 11/13

- **Support NRPM by participating in Light the Night!** Youth service agencies, community groups, and individuals across the country will be hosting candlelight vigils to “shine a light” on the issues and show solidarity with youth in crisis.
- **Share your photos!** For added impact, take a photo of your group wearing green and post it to social media with the hashtag #NRPM2018. Tag NRS and we could share your photo!

Wednesday 11/14

- **Statistics/Talking Points:**
 - In a 2013 study, The Institute of Medicine found that homelessness is the largest risk factor for CSEC and sex trafficking of minors. Institute of Medicine report.

- Runaway and homeless children are vulnerable to CSEC both because of their young age and their circumstances. Pimps have been known to actively target locations where homeless children and youth congregate, including on the streets, at foster care group homes, and at runaway and homeless shelter programs. Homeless youth are often its victims.
- Expanding access to emergency housing options can reduce the risk that runaway and homeless youth will be victims of CSEC but further progress requires minimizing the length of time young people remain homeless. This can be achieved by helping homeless children and youth quickly reunify with family and quickly connecting those who cannot be reunified to long-term transitional housing and support services. [NCHE Issue Brief: Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children \(CSEC\) and Youth Homelessness.](#)

Thursday 11/15

- **Suggested movies:** *Gimme Shelter, Where the Day Takes You*
- **Suggested books:** *Miles From Nowhere, Kicked Out*
- **Reminders:** Prompt followers/ volunteers/ staff/ local agencies to share their own stories or additional pieces of media on social media.

Friday 11/16

- **Call to action nationally:** highlight some national agencies that do work to support victims and survivors of trafficking such as National Human Trafficking Hotline, The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), and Million Kids.
- **Call to action locally:** Get involved through volunteering, donating, and/or advocating. Local agencies to highlight upcoming events or discussions about runaway and homeless youth issues.

Week Three: System Involved Youth (11/19-11/23)

Monday 11/19

- **Statistics/Talking Points:**
 - Of the nearly 25,000 runaways reported to NCMEC in 2017, one in seven were likely victims of sex trafficking. Of those, 88% were in the care of social services when they went missing. [Learn more about children missing from care.](#)
 - Approximately 12 to 36 percent of youth ages 18 or 21 exiting the foster care system become homeless, which in 2010 translated to approximately 28,000 youth. (Dworsky, Dillman, Dion, Coffee-Borden, & Rosenau, [Housing for Youth Aging out of Foster Care: A Review of the Literature and Program Typology](#), March 2012)
- **Let's Talk Activity for the Week:** Module 3: Personal Influences – “Who’s On Your Bus” Activity

Tuesday 11/20

- **Support NRPM by participating in Teachable Tuesdays!** Utilize some of the talking points and statistics listed in the toolkit OR highlight a local RHY program in

your community to shine a light on the issues. Remember to use **#NRPM2018**. The point of this event is to educate the public about RHY issues.

Example Social Media Post:

Did you know... 1 in 30 adolescent minors (13-17) and 1 in 10 young adults (18-25) endures some form of homelessness in a year. Learn more about youth homelessness in America at voicesofyouthcount.org #NRPM2018.

Wednesday 11/21

• **Statistics/Talking Points:**

- Youths feel that caseworkers do not provide the support they need. They feel that caseworkers should visit more often and find out how the youth is doing. Caseworkers should take time to talk to the kids to understand them and try to make things better. Youths feel they are not asked their opinion and that caseworkers rely on the foster parent or a visual inspection to determine if everything is fine. Basically youths wanted caseworkers to listen to the youth, try to understand, be reasonable, and be flexible. [Why They Run](#)
- Most youth do not hate the system or blame it for having to remove them from their home; they just want it to work better. [Why They Run](#). Again, this goes to show that these are not bad kids, they are good kids in bad situations.

Thursday 11/22

- **Suggested movies:** *One Heart, Short Term 12, The Blindside, The Homestretch.*
- **Suggested books:** *The Language of Flowers, Foster Girl; A Memoir, Three Little Words: A Memoir.*
- **Reminders:** Prompt followers/ volunteers/ staff/ local agencies to share their own stories or additional pieces of media on social media.

Friday 11/23

- **Call to action nationally:** Highlight some national agencies doing great work to support youth in care. Some examples could be Together We Rise, National Foster Care Coalition, A Way Home America, Covenant House, National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty and Foster Youth in Action.
- **Call to action locally:** Get involved through volunteering, donating, and/or advocating. Local agencies to highlight upcoming fundraisers, volunteer opportunities, etc.

Week Four: Vulnerable Populations (11/26-11/30)

Monday 11/26

• **Statistics/Talking Points:**

- According to a 2017 Chapin Hall, Voices of Youth Count, [National Study](#):
 - ✓ Youth reporting annual household income of less than \$24,000 had a 162% higher risk of reporting homelessness.
 - ✓ Hispanic, non-white youth had a 33% higher risk of reporting homelessness.
 - ✓ Black or African American youth had an 83% higher risk of reporting homelessness.
 - ✓ LGBT youth had a 120% higher risk of reporting homelessness.

- **Let's Talk Activity for the Week:** Module 12: Sexuality & Sexual Orientation – “Becoming an LGBTQ Ally” Activity

Tuesday 11/27

- **Shout Out:** Because this is the last week and there are no specific national events consider giving a shout out/thank you to those who participated in your NRPM events during the month – write a blog, share a story, share pictures from events your organization did in the previous weeks. Remember to use **#NRPM2018** when sharing.

Wednesday 11/28

- **Statistics/Talking Points:**
 - Existing [research](#) suggests that youth from vulnerable populations or minority groups, may face disproportionate risks to their economic and social well-being.
 - [Research](#) on youth homelessness strongly suggests that LGBT youth are overrepresented among runaway and homeless youth, although prevalence estimates vary widely.
 - Learn more about studies done through [The Williams Institute](#).

Thursday 11/29

- **Suggested movies/documentaries:** Boys Don't Cry, Saved!, The Homestretch
- **Suggested books:** Kicked Out, Street Kids: Homeless Youth, Outreach, and Policing New York's Streets, With No Direction Home: Homeless Youth on the Road and In the Streets
- **Reminders:** Prompt followers/ volunteers/ staff/ local agencies to share their own stories or additional pieces of media on social media.

Friday 11/30

- **Call to action nationally:** learn more about runaway and homeless youth across the country at 1800RUNAWAY.org or consider highlighting some agencies such as CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers, National Safe Place, and True Colors Fund.
- **Call to action locally:** Remember to make one last call to action – encourage people to get involved through volunteering, donating, and/or advocating with their local agencies.

**If you have any questions or need technical support please
contact prevention@1800RUNAWAY.org**

**Thank you to everyone for
participating in NRPM 2018!**