Endorsements for the National Runaway Switchboard and the *Why They Run Report*

The extensive research efforts dedicated to the *Why They Run r*eport help us better understand the issues facing our at-risk and runaway youth and will serve as an important tool to shape future programming and services. I salute the National Runaway Switchboard's commitment to keeping runaway youth off of the streets and reuniting families across Illinois and throughout the nation.

Thank you for your dedication in managing the *Why They Run* campaign. I look forward to reading the report when it is released on May 12th.

Pat Quinn
Governor Illinois

WhyTheyRun

As a mother and grandmother, I especially appreciate that the National Runaway Switchboard is on the front lines everyday, working directly with at-risk children, and connecting runaways with critical services to keep them safe and off the streets. The *Why They Run* report represents the latest in the NRS's tireless efforts to combat the silent epidemic of runaway youth, and provides valuable insights into the lives of our nation's most vulnerable children. I look forward to working with the NRS as we continue to explore new and innovative ways to better meet the needs of runaway and homeless kids, in Chicago and around the nation.

U.S. Representative Judy Biggert (R-IL-13)
Co-Chair of the Congressional Missing, Exploited and Runaway Children's Caucus

WhyTheyRun

The National Runaway Switchboard provides a critical service, connecting runaway youth with their families and providing support to young people who have left home. NRS educates parents, teens, and communities about the realities that face young runaways on the streets and extends a hand to young people who believe that running away is their only means of escape. The work of NRS helps bring runaway youth in from the streets, whether that means placing them back home or in other safe housing. The research conducted by NRS is also providing greater insight into the reasons young people choose to run away from home. This research will help us determine the best strategies to serve at-risk and runaway youth. We have a responsibility to protect the most vulnerable among us, and I commend the National Runaway Switchboard for its decades of service to some of the nation's most at-risk youth.

U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL)

WhyTheyRun

The Chicago Community Trust was pleased to provide major support to the National Runaway Switchboard's report *Why They Run*. The report provides much-needed and accessible insight into today's youth culture and a wide array of information that should be helpful to anyone trying to conduct outreach to this sometimes hard to reach runaway population.

Jim Lewis
Chicago Community Trust

WhyTheyRun

Why They Run: An in-depth look at America's runaway youth, presented by the National Runaway Switchboard provides critical data that are needed to develop and deliver more tailored and effective services to youth who are either at risk for running away, or who have already run away from home.
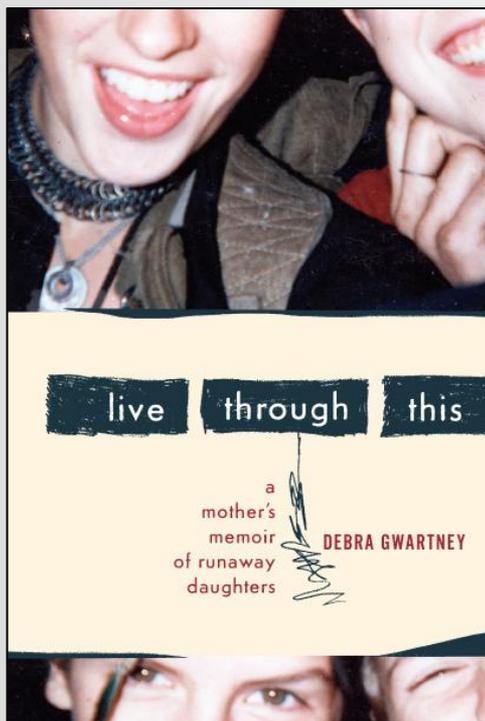
With this report, the National Runaway Switchboard once again demonstrates its commitment to generating and disseminating sound research that has practical applications for those who are providing services to some of the most vulnerable youth in our country.

Without such comprehensive scientific data, program and policy decisions may be based on anecdotal data that do not represent the true life experiences of young people who are struggling with challenging issues related to leaving home or returning home. I applaud NRS for continuing to be at the forefront of providing critical and cutting edge resources to both runaway/homeless youth and those of us who seek to serve these young people.

Gary W. Harper, Ph.D., M.P.H.
Professor, Department of Psychology
Director, Master of Public Health Program
DePaul University

WhyTheyRun

Even though it's been more than a decade since my children returned home from a yearlong bout as train-hopping runaways, even though the girls are healthy and thriving, I'll never forget the pain of our past. I didn't want to face the situation with my own children, but now I know we have reached a crisis point with young people who decide they'd rather live on violence- and drug-ravaged streets than stay at home with family tensions.

Through NRS research, I've become educated about the numbers of families embroiled in the runaway quandary (finally realizing that I was not alone in dealing with teenagers determined to run); I've come to understand the legislative initiatives the organization has supported to the betterment of every American family; and I have a better grasp of the tremendous solicitude that goes into NRS counselors' attempts (many of them successful) to bring parents and children back together again. I have been able to work through much of my grief about the years of difficulty in my family life in part because NRS has provided me, and thousands of others, with a broader view of a national challenge—their commitment to keep youth off the streets, away from the predators who are deft at luring young people into danger. NRS has, and will continue to, emphasize the profundity of an issue that permeates too many lives, and that needs attention, right now, from all of us.

Debra Gwartney
Author of *Live Through This: A Mother's Memoir of Runaway Daughters and Reclaimed Love*, finalist for the 2009 National Book Critics Circle Award

debragwartney.com

WhyTheyRun

In my experience working with teenagers, one of the biggest complaints that they have is the feeling of not being respected by adults. The National Runaway Switchboard treats these young people with respect and tremendous honesty. Its focus is to educate kids and give them the help they need and deserve. For many kids, calling NRS is their last ditch effort to reach out for support before they take more drastic action. For this reason alone, the work of NRS should be praised and commended.

Jason Langin
Teacher
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