

Young Women's Empowerment Project

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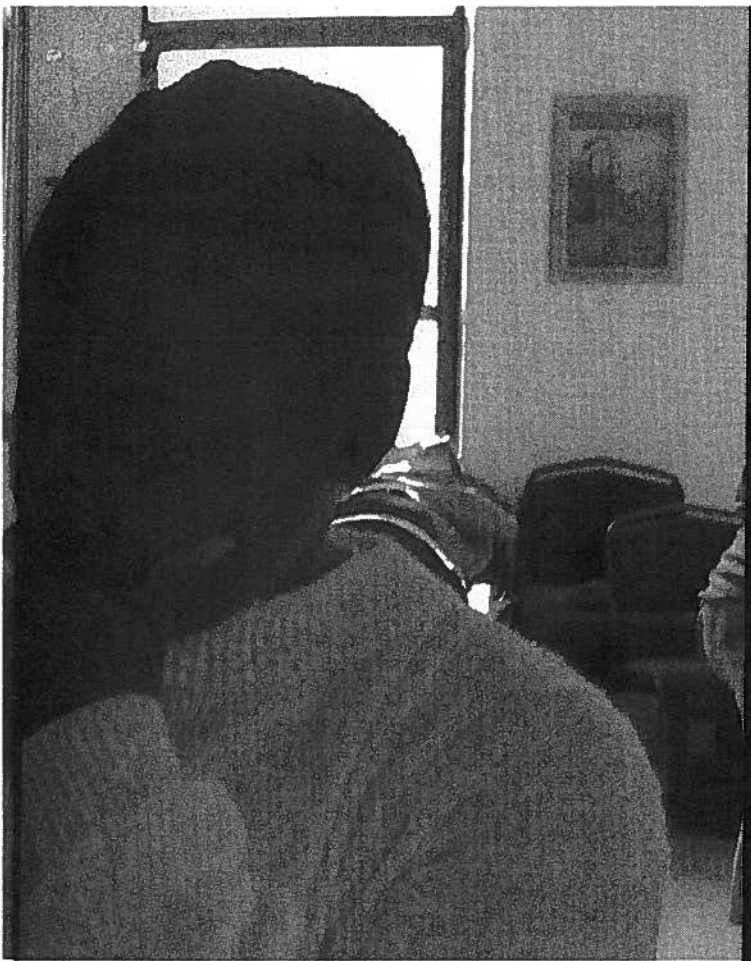
The Young Women's Empowerment Project is for and by girls and young women impacted by the sex trade and street economies. Sex trade means any way a girl can trade sex or sexuality for money or survival needs, such as a place to stay, food, drugs, etc. The street economy is any way of getting money in the streets. We are a harm-reduction-based program, meaning that we don't force anyone to change. Instead, we help them find safer ways of doing what they do and we embrace any positive change. We are very social-justice- and transformative-justice based. Transformative justice means that we try to rely upon ourselves as a community instead of turning to systems for solutions to our problems.

WE HAVE DIFFERENT programs girls can participate in. *Girls in Charge* is our weekly leadership group where girls can learn about political education and are paid to make important decisions about our project. We go out into the community and outreach to girls in the sex trade, teach them about harm reduction as well as just support them. We also lead popular education workshops where we have open discussions about the sex trade with groups of youth throughout the Chicago area and surrounding suburbs.

The police are in a position of institutional power, meaning that they are a major institution that exercises power over us. As a project we have had a lot of experience with the police and our constituency often falls victim to racial and gender tar-

getting from the police. This past summer the police targeted us, and we sometimes had as many as thirty police cars lined up and down our block. The police harassed one of our outreach workers because she was flouting for a focus group. In the past five years, we have only called the police once, and it was a life-threatening emergency. This is a prime example of how transformative justice applies in our day-to-day project life. Our space is a "no police zone," meaning we don't allow any officer inside our space.

Police abuse of power is evident in the research project we are currently in the middle of that focuses on girls' resilience in the face of and resistance to violence. This research is very exciting and important to us because we designed



Broadway Youth Center

THE BROADWAY YOUTH CENTER, a program of Howard Brown Health Center and its community partners, is a community-based health organization. Howard Brown is the Midwest's premier lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) health care organization and leads the region in addressing the comprehensive healthcare needs of people in the LGBT community.

The Broadway Youth Center (BYC) currently provides an array of holistic services and support that addresses the needs of queer youth, youth of color, poor youth, formerly incarcerated youth, youth involved in the sex trade and street economies, immigrant youth, and youth experiencing homelessness or housing instability. Opened in November of 2004, the BYC offers free medical and STD/HIV testing services, LGBTQ-specific programming, an LGBTQ GED program, a drop-in program for youth experiencing housing instability, counseling, case management, and access to basic needs. A collaboration between the PIC communiversity and the Broadway Youth Center emerged from intersecting issues related to the goals of the BYC drop-in program: frameworks informed by harm reduction, experiences with trauma, and anti-oppression work.

Tamms Year Ten Campaign

Year Ten is a coalition of prisoners, ex-prisoners, families, artists, activists, and concerned citizens who have come together to protest the misguided and inhumane policies at Tamms C-MAX, and to call for an end to State-sanctioned torture. Year Ten was initiated—through cultural, educational, and political events—to publicize Tamms after ten years of operation.

In 1998, the first prisoners were transferred from prisons across the state to Tamms CMAX in southern Illinois. This new "supermax" prison, designed to keep men in constant solitary confinement, was intended for short-term incarceration. The Illinois Department of Corrections called it a one-year "shock treatment." Now, ten years later, over one-third of the original prisoners have been there for a decade. They have lived in isolation 24/7 – no human contact, no phone calls, no programming, no communal activity.

it. We will collect and analyze our own data as well. We focus on individual and institutional violence, and see the police as a major form of violence. While conducting this research, we have heard stories about police raping and impregnating girls and forcing them to get abortions. Police have stalked girls, refused to help girls in obvious need of assistance, and arrested girls who work together for safety, charging them with pimping each other. The list of police abuses could be endless, but we focus more on how girls fight back against this violence. We believe that knowledge is power, so we educate girls involved in the sex trade and/or drug trade about their legal rights when dealing with the police.