

Southcentral Foundation (SCF) Teaching Family Home

Southcentral Foundation recently purchased the residential property on the corner of Cottonwood and 36th. SCF intends to use this property to establish a Teaching Family Home for youth between the ages of 14 and 17.

What is a Teaching Family Home? A Teaching Family home is a single family residence, with live-in *teaching* parents who provide a healthy, family environment for youth. The family maintains a schedule which supports the youth's academic, health and emotional development, balancing structure, teaching and skill building with recreation and play. The teaching parents are responsible for the home and are the primary contact for neighbors.

The Home is located in the community and integrates youth into as many community activities as possible. Youth in the home attend public school, ride the school bus, attend church, and are supported to engage in the same "normal" activities experienced by children in stable homes. The family home engages in family activities, maintains a healthy schedule to support success in school, healthy recreational activities and traditional family values. The Teaching Parent(s) and youth in each home prepare meals, dine together and hold daily "family meetings" where youth are encouraged to share about their successes and challenges as well as experience the opportunity to learn how to communicate with others in mutually supportive ways. It is believed by many that integration into the mainstream contributes to the perception of an improved quality of life. As youth practice and demonstrate positive skills, their communities, families and social networks respond more positively to them, thereby increasing the likelihood of future success as well as creation of additional stability in their lives as they transition from adolescents to young adulthood.

Who are the youth? Youth in the home come from diverse backgrounds which have prompted referral to the home. Many have experienced disruption in their families of origin and may not have experienced healthy family environments which support positive physical and emotional development and learning. Youth may be referred to the Teaching Family Home by families, private and/or State programs.

Each youth is carefully screened to determine whether they are appropriate for living in the home. Exclusionary criteria are in place to screen out youth who may pose safety risks (i.e., aggressiveness, risk to self or others, history of sexual offenses. Youth in the Cottonwood Home will be boys, ages 14-17 years of age.

The youth will attend public school, ride the school bus and engage in extra curricular activities. The home maintains a consistent schedule which supports the youth (i.e., school, homework time, dinner preparation/family dining, family conference, and consistent bed times). Youth are always in the supervision of the Teaching Parents until they have demonstrated the responsibility and skills to support a gradual increase in independence. Some youth may receive other supports outside of the home, possibly including counseling, family support, education and/or vocational tutoring, and special education services. Again, these services are provided outside of the home.

How long will the youth live in the home? Length of time in the home varies- depending upon the needs of the each youth.

Other youth in the neighborhood? Making connections with others and developing positive peer groups is an important skill. Youth will have the opportunity to develop friendships with others attending the same schools, and it is natural to assume acquaintances will be made. Positive and appropriate relationships will be supported.

Can a Teaching Family Home be located in a neighborhood? The home will be operating as a single family home, consistent with current property zoning regulations.

Will the home stand out from other homes in the neighborhood? SCF strives to maintain a low profile in the neighborhood and should not appear any different than a single family residence receiving in home support. Youth are not allowed to wander the neighborhoods un-chaperoned. Vehicle traffic will be minimal and the property will be well maintained, as are all of SCF programs and facilities. The youth in the home will not operate vehicles. SCF also plans to invest approximately \$85,000 in property improvements during the next month.

What about involvement in the community and neighborhood? The Teaching Parents in the home will create relationships with neighbors and be active in the schools attended by the youth. The goal is to be a good neighbor, to establish and maintain connections and seek feedback about the home's operation for the purposes of improvement and expedient resolution of concerns. The relationships and connections within the community are critical and demonstrate a very important skill to the youth- how to be a good neighbor and how to be a positive community member.

The Teaching Parents, as well as representation from SCF, will attend and participate in Community Council Meetings. Evaluation of the home involves formal and informal feedback from key stakeholders, which include the immediate community/neighbors, the families of the youth, direct observation of the home and other stakeholders.

What is the process for addressing concerns? The neighbors' and community are assured direct access to the Teaching Parents in the home to address any concerns, with a commitment to respond to concerns promptly. Neighbors will also be provided with direct access to Management overseeing the home as well as SCF leadership. SCF wishes to establish a sense of comfort for the community and demonstrate accountability regarding resolution of concerns.

For more information and/or questions, please contact:

Katie Johnson, Administrator
Southcentral Foundation
4501 Diplomacy Drive
Anchorage, AK 99508
907.729.8550
907.729.8547
Or email:
kjohnson@scf.cc