



**Unity Care Group, Inc.**  
"Creating Healthier Communities"

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# Unity Care Brings Transitional Housing to Monterey County

**Salinas, Calif., (October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2003)** - Unity Care Group has partnered with Monterey County to open the first-ever Transitional Housing Program dedicated to serving youth who have aged out of the foster care system.

The main objective of the Monterey County THP is to provide sustainable transitional living for youth while they are going to school, receiving job training, securing employment and learning skills necessary for independent living. The grand opening will be held Wednesday, November 12, from noon to 2 p.m. at 1519 Partridge Street, Salinas.

According to the Homeless Census and Foster / Homeless Youth Study of Monterey County (May 2002), it is likely that at least 1 in 4 children who emancipate from the foster care system of Monterey County will end up homeless within 3 years of their departure from foster care.

Unity Care Group is a non-profit organization serving at-risk youth in five counties throughout the Bay Area. In addition to 14 group homes – three of which are transitional homes – Unity Care provides a host of other community outreach programs for youth.

Unity Care also operates two transitional houses in Santa Clara County. Since our Transitional Housing Program began in 1998, more than a dozen young adults have successfully graduated from THP equipped with the necessary skills to live on their own. The Salinas home expands Unity Care's Transitional Housing Program and meets a growing need in Monterey County.

To determine eligibility, the intake process will include screening and evaluating the youth's background and most current program progress. The youth will work with Unity Care's caseworker to develop an individualized living plan, identifying needs and establishing goals necessary for self-sufficiency.

### Evidence of Need for THP in Monterey County

The experience of homelessness can be personally debilitating for anyone, particularly for youth. Data collected in this study indicates that homeless youth are not thriving. Homeless youth struggle not only with housing issues, but also with school attendance issues, health problems, and subsequently are participating in many dangerous and illegal activities like substance use and unsafe sex.

The following list highlights many important, yet disturbing findings from the homeless youth survey.

50% of the homeless female youth were currently or had been pregnant, and nearly one in five homeless youth respondents (19%) have children.

20% of homeless youth surveyed had been homeless more than two years.

22% of homeless youth were 16 years old or younger.

64% did not attend school, and early one in every five homeless respondents (18%) had less than an 8th grade education.

57% of the homeless youth surveyed were employed at least part time, but nearly one fourth of employed homeless youth respondents (24%) earn less than minimum wage.

22% of the homeless youth interviewed were receiving government assistance.

17% of homeless youth supplemented their income with theft, as well as in other dangerous and illegal ways including drugs (16%) and sex (7%).

80% of homeless youth survey respondents did not have health insurance, and one third (33%) of homeless youth interviewed go to the emergency room when they need health care.

51% of homeless youth had drunk alcohol in the past month, 43% had used marijuana, more than a fifth (23%) had used amphetamines, and nearly one in every twenty (4%) had used heroin.

#### **ABOUT UNITY CARE GROUP**

Founded in 1992, Unity Care Group, Inc. is a community-based non-profit multi-service youth and family development agency. Founded with the goal of developing educational and social programs to enrich the lives of at-risk youth, our mission is to provide quality youth and family programs for the purpose of creating healthier communities through lifelong partnerships. For more information contact the Development Department at (408) 971-9822 or visit us at [www.unitycare.org](http://www.unitycare.org).

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