[Declaring 2015 the Year of Recognizing Homeless Youth]

Resolution urging the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors to declare 2015 the Year of Recognizing Homeless Youth and calling on the City to prioritize the provision of housing, employment training, and services for the homeless youth population.

WHEREAS, Mayor Edwin Lee in his State of the City Address outlined a directive on homelessness for San Francisco in the coming year;¹ and

WHEREAS, under the Mayor’s leadership, the City launched the new Navigation Center that provides comprehensive services and programs for the adult homeless population;² and

WHEREAS, while the City’s concern for the adult homeless population is commendable, it has yet to specifically address the homeless youth of the city this year; and

WHEREAS, between 353,000 - 503,000 youth ages 12-24 are homeless on any given day in the United States;³ and

WHEREAS, only about 4,000 youth shelter beds are available across the country⁴; and

WHEREAS, the city’s, nation’s, and world’s most vulnerable homeless population are the young people ages 24 and under, with a higher percentage of homeless youth reporting domestic violence as the cause of their homelessness compared to the adult population;⁵ and;

WHEREAS, 5,000 young people die every year while on the street because of illness, assault, or suicide;⁶ and

⁵: 2013 San Francisco Homeless Unique Youth Count & Survey Comprehensive Report p. 10
WHEREAS, states spend approximately $5.7 billion each year to incarcerate youth for a non-violent offense, such as homelessness;⁷ and

WHEREAS, 66 percent of surveyed youth reported they had been harassed by police or law enforcement;⁸ and

WHEREAS, homeless youth reported having experienced homelessness a similar number of times as the adult population despite their young age;⁹

WHEREAS, nearly half of the homeless youth surveyed reported they had been homeless for one year or more;¹⁰ and

WHEREAS, one in three youth are approached by an exploiter or recruited by a pimp within the first 48 hours of being on the street;¹¹ and

WHEREAS, LGBT youth are disproportionately represented in the homeless youth population, with as many as 40% of the nation’s homeless youth being LGBT, while between 5-10% of the overall youth population is LGBT¹²; and

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has required public agencies and service providers to conduct a Point in Time count of the homeless population in their cities during one of the last ten days of January every odd-numbered year since 2005; and

WHEREAS, San Francisco was one of the first cities to begin homeless youth counts, in 2007, as a separate population from the homeless adult count,¹³ and

² 2013 San Francisco Homeless Unique Youth Count & Survey Comprehensive Report p.13
³ 2013 San Francisco Homeless Unique Youth Count & Survey Comprehensive Report p.9
⁴ ibid
⁵ Youth Homelessness in San Francisco: 2013 Report on Incidence and Needs p. 3
WHEREAS, HUD has only recently recognized that the homeless youth are a unique population with specific needs, and began counting homeless youth in their Point in Time count in 2013;\(^\text{14}\) and

WHEREAS, 1,902 homeless children and transitional age youth (TAY) were counted in San Francisco’s 2013 Point-in-Time count, accounting for more than one-fourth of all homeless individuals counted;\(^\text{15}\) and

WHEREAS, the San Francisco Unified School District employs a broader definition of homelessness that includes youth living in shelters, single room occupancy hotels, transitional housing, the streets, cars, doubled up, and other inadequate accommodations in their own recordkeeping;\(^\text{16}\) and

WHEREAS, SFUSD estimates that there were 2,357 homeless school-aged youth enrolled in the district on January 24\(^{th}\) 2013, up from 2,200 in January 2011;\(^\text{17}\) and

WHEREAS, according to the 2013 Homeless Point-in-Time Count Survey, 21 percent of homeless youth reported they had traded sex, drugs, or both for a place to sleep; one in ten homeless youth reported they had been the victim of sexual exploitation; more than one in four homeless youth have been physically attacked or assaulted; and nearly half of youth respondents reported they had been robbed or burglarized;\(^\text{18}\) and

WHEREAS, nearly one in five youth surveyed reported using methamphetamines and one in ten reported using heroin;\(^\text{19}\) and

WHEREAS, a significant portion of the homeless youth population struggle with mental health and substance abuse, as 41% report their mental health was “fair” or “poor” and 23% report substance abuse as the primary cause of their homelessness;\(^\text{20}\) and

\(^\text{14}\) http://cahomelessyouth.library.ca.gov/docs/pdf/Hidden-in-Plain-Sight_FullReportFINAL.pdf p. 6-7
\(^\text{15}\) 2013 San Francisco Homeless Unique Youth Count & Survey Comprehensive Report p.5
\(^\text{16}\) 2013 San Francisco Homeless Unique Youth Count & Survey Comprehensive Report p.28
\(^\text{17}\) 2013 San Francisco Homeless Unique Youth Count & Survey Comprehensive Report p.28
\(^\text{18}\) 2013 San Francisco Homeless Unique Youth Count & Survey Comprehensive Report p.12
\(^\text{19}\) 2013 San Francisco Homeless Unique Youth Count & Survey Comprehensive Report p.14
WHEREAS, homeless youth are in need of job and education support with 71% of homeless youth being unemployed at the time of the survey, 25% not having completed high school or obtained a GED, and 72% of homeless youth respondents wanting to further their education;\(^{21}\) and

WHEREAS, Larkin Street Youth Services (provider of educational, vocational, and housing support, among other services, to homeless youth in San Francisco), reestablished its Youth Advisory Board this year to serve as a voice for homeless youth in the city; and

WHEREAS, Larkin Street provided services to 3,450 youth between July 2012 and July 2013,\(^{22}\) which is a greater number than the 2013 Point-In-Time Count (which found 1,902 homeless children and TAY); and

WHEREAS, over one third of Larkin Street youth have spent time in jail, and the odds of becoming homeless within a year of release from incarceration is 1 in 11,\(^{23}\) and

WHEREAS, approximately two-thirds of Larkin Street youth report at intake experiencing a serious mental health issue within the past 30 days;\(^{24}\) and

WHEREAS, the homeless youth population is not homogenous and different people have different needs, but what all homeless youth have in common is the need for shelter, food, water, and clothing; and

WHEREAS, when these common needs are addressed, these at-risk youth take the lead and serve as policy advisors, youth commissioners, community advocates, and graduate from intensive training programs like Year Up;\(^{25}\) and

WHEREAS, Congress and the Obama Administration set a federal goal of ending homelessness for youth, children, and families by 2020;\(^{26}\) and

\(^{20}\) 2013 San Francisco Homeless Unique Youth Count & Survey Comprehensive Report p.14
\(^{21}\) 2013 San Francisco Homeless Unique Youth Count & Survey Comprehensive Report p.9, 16
\(^{22}\) ibid
\(^{23}\) 2013 San Francisco Homeless Unique Youth Count & Survey Comprehensive Report p.2
\(^{24}\) Youth Homelessness in San Francisco: 2013 Report on Incidence and Needs p. 5
\(^{25}\) Year Up <http://www.yearup.org/> 
\(^{26}\) http://usich.gov/opening_doors/
WHEREAS, ending youth homelessness in San Francisco is a strategic step towards San Francisco’s 10-Year Plan to Abolish Chronic Homelessness; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Youth Commission and the Youth Advisory Board of Larkin Street Youth Services urge the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors to declare 2015 the Year of Recognizing Homeless Youth, as this year marks the nation being five years away from its goal of ending youth homelessness; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Youth Commission and the LSYS Youth Advisory Board of urge the mayor and the Board of Supervisors to complete the 2015 TAY Housing Plan, and establish a new TAY Housing goal after the TAY Housing Assessment is completed during the summer of 2015; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Youth Commission and the Youth Advisory Board urge the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors to set aside funding in the 2015-16 budget for additional TAY housing, on-site counseling services, education and job placement for homeless youth.

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Michel Li
2014-2015 Youth Commission Chair

Adopted by Youth Commission April 20, 2015