

What is YouthCare's Casa de Los Amigos Program?

YouthCare's Casa de los Amigos Program (Casa) is a 20-bed emergency shelter program funded by the Office of Refugee Resettlement, which is domiciled at the Federal Department of Health and Human Services. The program was founded almost a decade ago to serve unaccompanied minors ages 12-17. The young people coming to Casa are fleeing their home countries in order to survive. Their families have been shattered by war, gang violence, trafficking, or extreme poverty. They arrive in our country alone, traumatized, and looking for safety.

What are the goals of Casa de Los Amigos?

Every day, our goals in Casa de los Amigos are to: 1) focus on family reunification for every youth whenever possible, and 2) provide loving and dignified care.

What does YouthCare's Casa de Los Amigos offer?

In their time at Casa, each young person receives customized supports including legal assistance, case management, physical and mental health care, and education. Our staff is multi-lingual and dedicated to providing familiar and culturally representative food, helping youth decorate their rooms and select clothing and school supplies, and securing any products or services that would help make a young person feel as valued and cherished as possible. Though some organizations contracted through ORR run detention facilities, **Casa de los Amigos is not a detention center.**

Is Casa de Los Amigos serving youth who have been separated from their families at the border?

Since its founding, Casa has served minors who have crossed into the U.S. by themselves. Recently, however, a small number of young people have arrived at YouthCare who need our support because they have been separated from their families and are suffering under heartless federal policies. This shift in policy motivates YouthCare to fight for change and reinforces our commitment to young people: every young person facing homelessness because of trauma and loss of family connection deserves an opportunity to be safe, to be supported, and to build a thriving future. Until there are no more youth who experience trauma—or who experience homelessness at all—we will provide unwavering care for those who need help today.

What is YouthCare's position about the government's "zero tolerance" policy?

The separation of the young people from their families is cruel, inhumane, and unconscionable. YouthCare categorically condemns the atrocities at the border and demands that the government reunites the families they have actively separated.

What is YouthCare doing to advocate for change?

Currently, we're working on efforts with the Washington State Attorney General's Office, the Washington State Office of the Governor, U.S. Senator Patty Murray, and U.S. Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal. **We thank them for their leadership.**