



SASHA
BRUCE

2020 - 2024
Strategic Plan

“With programs like
Sasha Bruce Youthwork in
Washington, DC there is a
chance for teens. A chance not
to slip through the cracks.”

- Alicia, Independent Living Program
Resident

Sasha Bruce Youthwork

The mission of Sasha Bruce Youthwork is to improve the lives of runaway, homeless, abused, and neglected youth and their families in the Washington, DC area.

We achieve this by providing shelter, counseling, life skills training, and positive youth development activities to approximately 1,500 youth and 5,000 family members each year.

Sasha Bruce seeks to support and empower young people and their families. Our approach is focused on the family and based on our clients' competencies. Our counselors focus on identifying the strengths of each young person and family. A person who believes that he or she can change and who can envision a different life can achieve their goals.

Sasha Bruce provides help wherever it is needed—in its shelters, on the streets, and in the homes of young people and families. Serving a community where institutions and systems are broken and young people and their families are struggling, Sasha Bruce uses proven youth development practices to help youth find new ways not only to survive, but to thrive and realize success.

Our Founder

Deborah Shore founded Sasha Bruce Youthwork in 1974 as the Washington Streetwork Project, and she has served the organization continuously as its Executive Director. Today, Sasha Bruce is one of the largest and most experienced providers of services to youth in Washington.

In recognition of her groundbreaking work in youth and family services, Shore has received numerous accolades. Most recently, she was named Washingtonian of the Year in 2016.

With 45 years of experience meeting the growing needs of DC's youth and families, Sasha Bruce is always willing to listen and ready to help.





Our Vision

Sasha Bruce envisions a community in which young people and families have access to the opportunities and services they need to succeed.

Our Programs

Sasha Bruce provides youth and families with the support and skills they need to thrive.

Our 19 programs are organized into Three **Pillars of Opportunity**: Safe Homes, Life Skills Development, and Workforce and Educational Opportunities. Within each pillar, various programs and initiatives advance the mission of the organization

Although our programs draw youth from all over the Washington area, we have historically drawn the majority of our clients (currently over 80%) from Wards 5, 6, 7, and 8.

Communities in these wards suffer disproportionately from poverty, drug-related activities and violent crimes. Of the estimated 1,500 youth and 5,000 family members served last year, an estimated 57% were female and 43% were male. 95% percent were African-American.

Sasha Bruce plays a unique role in caring for youth in our area. One of our facilities, the **Sasha Bruce House**, is unique in that it is the only “open-access” shelter in Washington for a general youth population—that is, for youth not referred for services by the juvenile justice or child welfare systems.

In addition, the District has designated Sasha Bruce to be the organization to assess and refer youth that are not accompanied by an adult to shelters throughout the city. Our **Safe Place Hotline**, a 24-hour phone and emergency pick-up service, is the only one of its kind in the District.



Safe Homes

Providing short-term shelters and transitional housing for homeless youth, housing for youth in the juvenile justice system, and family strengthening and reconnection services.



Life Skills

Promoting improved family communication, safe-sex behaviors, healthy life skills practices, and improved academic performance.



Workforce & Education

Providing GED preparation, connection to workforce training opportunities, and assistance with applications to college and technical schools.



Expanding to Meet the Needs of Homeless Youth in the Region

Sasha Bruce expanded or added new programs to meet the growing needs of DC's homeless youth population.

Safe Homes

Downtown Drop-In Center

To meet the needs of youth in DC's Chinatown, the drop-in center added an additional night to its schedule, doubling our capacity to provide survival services to youth in the city's core.

Life Skills

Clay Terrace Family Success Center

Our partnership with the District of Columbia will bring our holistic approach to family strengthening and youth development to one of the city's most impoverished neighborhoods. The effort will help prevent family conflict while helping youth reach their full potential.

Workforce &
Education

Jonathan & Hannah Allen Innovation Lab

The new lab, equipped with computers, entertainment equipment, and study areas, enhances the services available to youth at The Bruce House. The lab will form part of our commitment to college and career readiness.

Workforce &
Education

Lukey Kaempfer Transformation Project

This innovative program works with formerly homeless youth to help them apply and complete college and technical degrees to move them up the economic ladder.



Our Impact

Client outcome indicators for 2019 continue to demonstrate Sasha Bruce's unique role in meeting the needs of homeless youth in the region.

▲ 25% increase
over 2018

1,006

Homeless Youth were
cared for at our Drop-
In Center in 2019

16,577

Meals, showers, and
laundry services provided
to homeless youth

I Safe Homes



124 youth found emergency shelter at the Bruce House in 2019

89%

were reunited with their
original families or found
permanent shelter



70 youth graduated from our long-term housing program in 2019

87%

increased their income
through workforce training
and job placement

Challenges in Our Community

Despite our achievements this past year, our organization and the District as a whole face unprecedented challenges, fueled by trends in gun violence and other sources of trauma, sex trafficking, gentrification and displacement, eviction, job loss, immigration, unmet needs for mental health treatment, teen pregnancy, and gang activity.

The Youth Count DC census estimated that more than 1,300 transition age youth (18 to 24 years old) and minors not accompanied by an adult experienced homelessness or housing instability during 2018. This was a 19% increase from the previous year. Transition age youth made up the largest share of this count (94%).

Other characteristics of this population included:

- 59% were single and 41% were youth heads of households (25 years old or younger)
- 87% of the population was African American
- 38% of the single youth identified as LGBTQ+
- 59% experienced violence from a parent/guardian and/or intimate partner or spouse
- 15% of singles had resorted to sex for food or shelter
- 7% and 10% (singles and families respectively) experienced sex trafficking
- 28% reported one or more mental health conditions
- 20% of single youth reported having issues with drugs or alcohol
- 51% were in an emergency shelter or transitional housing, 36% were in unstable housing, and 9% were unsheltered entirely.





The Impact of COVID-19

The coronavirus pandemic striking the Washington area at the start of this five-year strategic planning period, along with the associated shutdowns of schools and other services, has made the challenges we face even greater.

This pandemic underscores the need to ensure that experienced, successful organizations like Sasha Bruce can continue to operate and meet the pressing needs of homeless youth in the region.

“Sasha Bruce Youthwork holds itself accountable not just for action... but also results. We are driven by a commitment to make a difference in the lives of youth, families and communities.”

- Deborah Shore,
Founder & Executive Director

Our Strategic Planning Process

Identified Strengths of Sasha Bruce Youthwork

Long track record and excellent reputation

Diversity and flexibility in high-quality programs

Excellent, committed staff

Financial Stability

Thought Leadership

In April 2019, the Board of Directors and the Executive Director of Sasha Bruce launched a rigorous strategic assessment process. Dr. Michela Perrone, President of MMP Associates, a strategic planning consulting firm, was engaged to facilitate the project.

The first step in the process was to convene an ad hoc Strategic Planning Steering Committee to guide the process. The Committee defined initial Areas of Strategic Priority and established a work plan to gather and analyze needed information.

The data-gathering phase included a review of internal documents and financial information, two focus group sessions, interviews with 18 nonprofit leaders and government officials in the Washington area, desk research led by 11 dedicated members of the Sasha Bruce staff, and a competitive analysis of seven other nonprofit organizations around the country. The data-gathering phase identified a number of strengths of Sasha Bruce, and a number of ways to better position our organization to meet future challenges.

With these and other significant advance preparations, the Board of Directors and senior staff met at an off-site Retreat in October 2019 to consider desired outcomes, goals, and strategies for the organization, and to recommend specific Areas of Strategic Priority, Goals, and Strategies for our five-year Strategic Plan. These recommendations were subsequently reviewed internally by the Sasha Bruce staff and considered and formally approved in modified form by the Board. Based on this very intentional process, and in light of our identified strengths and challenges, the organization identified the following Areas of Strategic Priority for the next five years.



Areas of Strategic Priority

Continue to Lead the Field by Demonstrating Impact

Including enhancing our existing protocols for measuring and monitoring program outcomes over time, and establishing Sasha Bruce as a leader in the field of evidence-based services.

Optimizing Service Delivery

Including developing a continuous quality improvement protocol for all programs and new initiatives, and investigating the viability of developing a community “HUB” to position the organization for future growth.

Organizational Effectiveness

Including ensuring that long-range leadership succession plans are in place, both for the senior staff and Board leadership, ensuring that we continue to implement best practices in management and programming, and that we continue to ensure that our funding adequately supports our program goals.

Our Vision for a Community “HUB”

Within the next five years, Sasha Bruce intends to investigate the feasibility of acquiring and/or developing a new facility to consolidate related programs, expand housing capacity, and better position the organization to meet the challenges of the future.

I. Continue to Lead the Field by Demonstrating Impact

01

Goal 1:

Enhance SBY's protocols for measuring and monitoring program outcomes over time

Strategies

-
- + Review funders' reporting requirements at least annually and make any necessary adjustments in SBY data collection and reporting. In doing so, harmonize reporting protocols across SBY programs wherever that is appropriate and possible
-
- + Implement SBY management plan to harmonize on-line universal client intake process across SBY programs
-
- + Incorporate as appropriate any outcomes metrics and monitoring protocols developed and/or recommended as best practices by research organizations
-
- + Use these metrics as appropriate to establish program goals, evaluate and communicate program performance, and guide future SBY investment decisions
-

02

Goal 2:

Establish SBY as a leader in the field of evidence-based youth services

Strategies

- + Select one or more SBY programs or intervention models for independent evaluation

- + Explore partnerships with established research organizations or individual researchers

- + Develop intervention materials for replication outside of SBY. In conjunction with other SBY communication strategies, communicate demonstrated impacts to the field, as well as to relevant SBY stakeholders

“Sasha Bruce was the best thing that ever happened to me. My whole perspective on life has changed.”

Jaleesa
- Independent Living Program Resident

II. Optimizing our Service Delivery

01

Goal 1:

Achieve clarity of purpose through the development of a continuous quality improvement protocol for all programs and new initiatives

Strategies

- + Evaluate all current and proposed new programs in light of appropriate criteria, including, but not limited to:
 - Evidence-based need and available funding; and
 - Analysis of the competition to avoid offering services better provided by other nonprofits

- + Continuously align the programs' organizational structure and management practices to the agency's mission, best practices and strategic goals

- + Develop and implement a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan that reflects our continuing commitment to these important values

02

Goal 2:

Investigate the viability of acquiring and/or developing a community “HUB” and utilizing it effectively

Strategies

- + Develop an architectural conceptual plan for a building meeting the needs of SBY; develop criteria for the identification of the ideal property with specificity as to the characteristics and attributes needed; and provide an opportunity for volunteers, supporters and funders to provide input, in each case as a means for key stakeholders to become more invested

- + Identify a revenue source for the project and/or develop and implement a targeted fundraising plan to buy and/or build the project and to support the related operation and its long-term viability

- + Develop and implement a plan to guide the most effective utilization of the HUB, by for example, exploring the feasibility of consolidating service sites and programs into the HUB

III. Organizational Effectiveness

Goal 1

Ensure that a long-range executive leadership succession plan is in place and is being implemented

01

Goal 2

Ensure that a Board leadership succession plan is in place and that the Board is positioned for future success

02

Goal 3

Implement best practices in administrative and programming areas in order to retain staff and to become a career and volunteerism destination in the region

03

Strategies

+ Research best practices for key administrative and programming areas

+ Develop and implement systems and structures supporting such best practices

Goal 4

Ensure that financial resources and funding support program purposes and goals enhance the organization's long-term financial strength

04

Strategies

- + Develop and implement a plan to raise funds for programs and longer-term needs based upon measurable goals, youth needs and strategic opportunities

- + Develop and implement a process to prioritize the use of our capital reserve to advance the mission of our organization

- + Establish the fundraising infrastructure to successfully host a 50th Anniversary celebration/fundraiser

Goal 5

Position the agency among elected officials and funders as a trusted leader in youth homelessness in the region through new communications strategies

05



A History of Sasha Bruce Youthwork

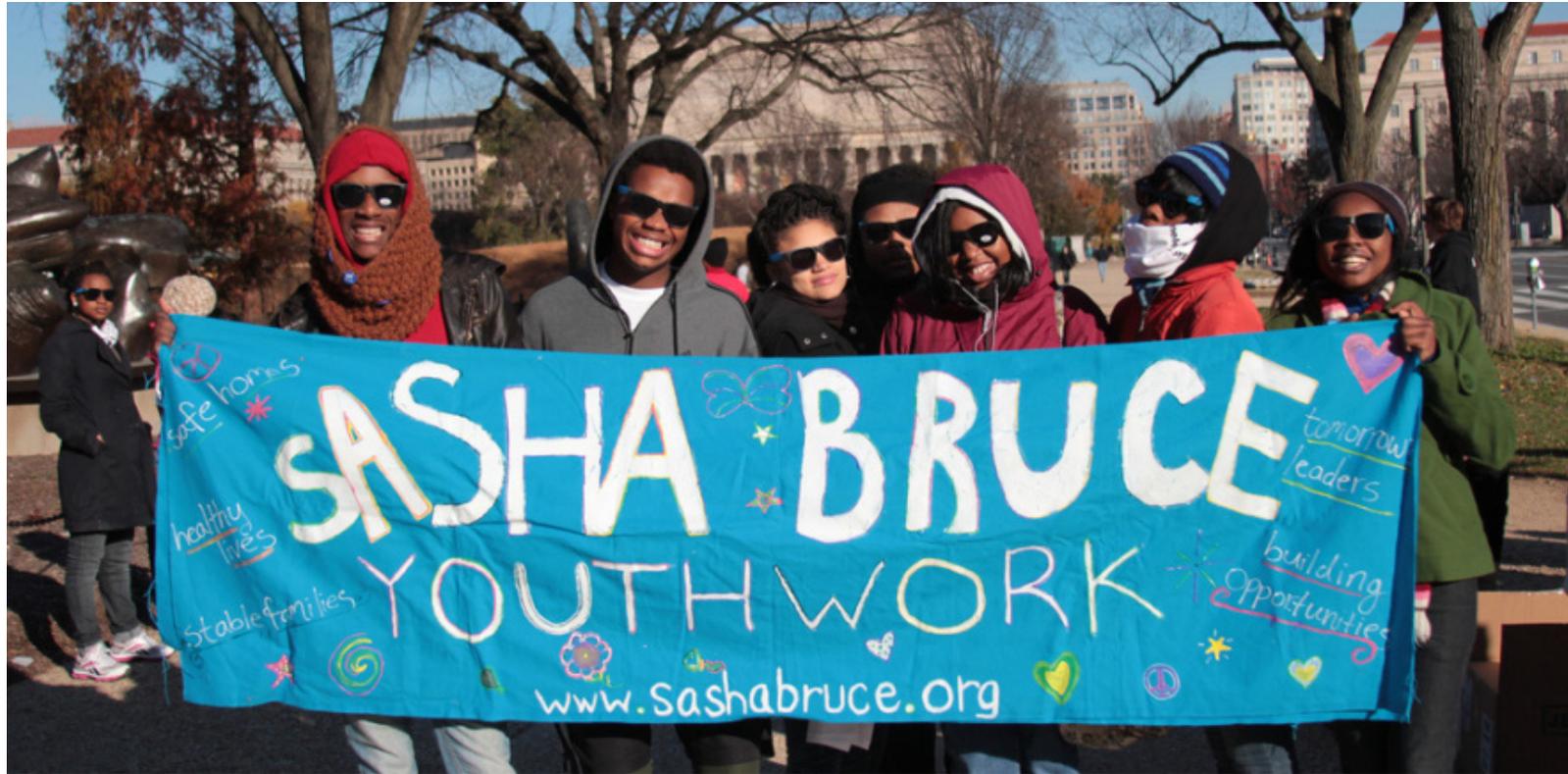
Deborah Shore founded Sasha Bruce Youthwork in 1974 as the Washington Streetwork Project. At that time, suburban street kids and out-of-town runaways congregated in the Georgetown and Dupont Circle areas of the District. With a small staff and a few volunteers, Shore counseled these young people on the streets. The Washington Streetwork Project established its first home when Christ Church in Georgetown donated basement space for a youth drop-in center. The focus of the organization's early work was to provide counseling and to reunite young people with their families.

In 1976, Shore and the Washington Streetwork Project came to the attention of Evangeline Bruce, wife of Ambassador David Bruce, following the tragic death of their daughter Sasha. Evangeline Bruce donated funds to start a youth shelter in memory of Sasha, who had helped troubled youth as a volunteer during her college years. Shore opened the Sasha Bruce House in 1977 to provide youth with a safe haven from the dangers of the streets.

The Washington Streetwork Project grew and changed over the next two decades in response to the changing needs of DC's troubled young people and families. Programs were added to bridge the gaps in available support services for youth. As street work became only a small part of the organization's activities, the name of the organization changed to Sasha Bruce Youthwork.

Today, Sasha Bruce is one of the largest and most experienced providers of services to youth in Washington, DC. In recognition of her groundbreaking work in youth and family service development, Executive Director Debby Shore has received numerous accolades. In 2012, she received the prestigious Champions of Change Award from the White House for her ongoing work in preventing youth homelessness. In 2014, she was inducted into the Washington DC Hall of Fame in recognition of her historic contributions to civic and community development in the nation's capital. Washingtonian Magazine also cited Shore's leadership by designating her as a 2016 Washingtonian of the Year.

With 45 years of experience meeting the growing needs of DC's youth and families with innovative programs, Sasha Bruce continues to work toward achieving its vision of a community in which young people and families have access to opportunities and services they need to succeed. Our work helps young people find safe homes, achieve and maintain good health and mental health, create and strengthen supportive and stable families, explore opportunities in education and careers, and become tomorrow's leaders. Through 19 professionally staffed programs located throughout the city, Sasha Bruce helps young people and families discover their own abilities to transform their lives.



Our Programs

The programs of Sasha Bruce Youthwork fall into three pillars: Safe Homes, Life Skills, and Workforce and Educational Opportunities. The following summarizes our current programs within these pillars:

Safe Homes Pillar

- **Sasha Bruce House** is an emergency shelter for runaway or homeless youth in the District. **Promise Place** is a shelter for young people in Prince George's County, MD.
- Two programs, **Independent Living Program** and **Transitional Living Program** provide housing and support toward self-sufficiency for youth ages 16-24. Our **Passages Program** now offers extended transitional housing for up to 24 young people.
- **Olaiya's Cradle** provides housing for young mothers ages 18-21 and their children.
- **REACH** and **Chloe House** are staff-secured residences for youth involved in the juvenile justice system.
- **The Family Strengthening and Reconnect Program** engages families in their natural settings following respite at one of the SBY shelters. The goal of this program is to prevent repeat episodes of homelessness.
- Our **Permanent Housing** and **Transitional Housing Programs** provide housing and support for 22 young homeless families.

Life Skills Pillar

- Our two **Drop-in Centers** offer low-threshold, non-residential harm reduction and case management services for homeless youth.
- Our new **Family Success Center** aims to strengthen and empower families in the Clay Terrace neighborhood of the District.
- The **Teen Outreach Program (TOP)** works to prevent incidences of teenage pregnancy at Ballou High School and other venues.
- **POWER** provides sexual health education services to high-risk adolescents, including runaway and homeless youth, commercial sex workers, street youth, teenage mothers, and court-adjudicated youth.
- The **Prevention Center** is a substance abuse education program for Wards 5 and 6.
- The **Credible Messenger Program** works to reduce court system recidivism and gang violence among youth through peer leader outreach and restorative justice strategies.
- Our **PASS Program** works with residents of public housing projects to change sexual behavior and violence norms which have contributed to a range of negative behaviors among youth.

Workforce and Educational Opportunities Pillar

- **The Lukey Kaempfer Transformation Project** teaches marketable vocational skills concurrent to educational goal-setting.

HOMES
NOT
STREETS

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