AS A NATIONAL, NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION, SOUTHWEST KEY PROGRAMS EXISTS TO CREATE OPPORTUNITIES AND IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR THOUSANDS OF YOUTH AND FAMILIES EACH DAY BY PROVIDING SAFE SHELTER, ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION, CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND QUALITY EDUCATION.

2019 ANNUAL REPORT
OUR MISSION: OPENING DOORS TO OPPORTUNITY SO INDIVIDUALS CAN ACHIEVE THEIR DREAMS.

NUESTRA MISIÓN: ABRIENDO PUERTAS DE OPORTUNIDAD PARA QUE TODAS LAS PERSONAS LOGREN SUS SUEÑOS.
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92% of Southwest Key employees are Hispanic or Latino.

“The best part of the job is seeing the changes we've been able to help put in motion. When kids reach back out and tell us about their successes, it makes it all worth it.”

– John, Program Director II, Buffalo, New York

“I love being surrounded by people who are dedicated to improving the lives of others.”

– Kristan, Project Manager, Austin, Texas

“It was a dream come true – the opportunity to help thousands of immigrant kids be one step closer to a better future for themselves.”

– Eva, Program Director, Phoenix, Arizona
Greetings,

Thank you for your interest in Southwest Key Programs and learning about our organization. This annual report serves as a snapshot of the outcomes and stories that make up this year, but can only begin to communicate the meaning of our mission, “opening doors to opportunity so individuals can achieve their dreams,” and what it means to our employees, partners and the youth and families we serve.

The youth and families we work with are seeking equality, education, and a healthier quality of life. At Southwest Key, we are committed to helping them achieve that dream. We believe in focusing on children because they are the drivers of change. And collectively, their achievements resonate across neighborhoods and have a compounding effect on society. We believe all children – regardless of color, nationality, background, ability, circumstances – have intrinsic value and dignity. Every child deserves an opportunity to escape poverty, neglect, violence, abuse or famine.

In 1987, Southwest Key was founded in a basement in San Antonio, Texas with just five employees. Since that time, we have grown and expanded – and so has the impact we make in communities across the United States. Southwest Key operates 75 programs in seven states: Texas, Arizona, California, Georgia, New York, Wisconsin and Florida. Through our programs, we have helped improve the lives of over 64,000 people this year alone.

Of course, none of these wonderful things would be possible without the support of our partners, staff, funders and advocates who champion our mission every day. If you would like to learn more about our work, please visit southwestkey.org.

Best wishes,

Joella Brooks
Interim CEO
Our Board of Directors

Southwest Key’s Board of Directors represents a range of skill sets and areas of expertise. As a national board, members represent the geographically diverse locations in which Southwest Key operates. Board members meet quarterly and are responsible for setting agency policies, providing financial oversight and guidance and setting the direction for growth.

Victor Garza  
Rosa Santis  
Catalina Gracia  
David Marshall, Jr.  
Anselmo Villarreal  
Jesus Cabrera

Our Leadership Team

Southwest Key is proud to be one of the most diverse nonprofits in the country. As a minority-led organization known for its cultural competency, we strive to represent the various groups we serve in our leadership team.

José E. Arroyo-Davila  
Vice President of Human Resources

Eric Marin  
Chief Financial Officer

Lloyd Bullard  
Chief Program Officer

Veronica Delgado-Savage  
Vice President of Youth Justice Services

Geraldo Rivera  
Vice President of Immigrant Children’s Services

Joella L. Brooks  
Interim Chief Executive Officer/Chief Operations Officer

Elizabeth Schepel  
Vice President of Performance Quality Improvement

Neil Nowlin  
Vice President of Communications

Dr. Salvador Cavazos  
Superintendent of Promesa Public Schools

This report pertains to Fiscal Year 2019 dated September 1, 2018 – August 31, 2019. Financial data is available upon request.
2019 Highlights

Who we are

We are a national nonprofit and minority-led organization dedicated to opening doors to opportunity so individuals can achieve their dreams.

Why we do it

We believe in and honor the potential of every child. We believe all children – regardless of color, nationality, background, ability, circumstances – have intrinsic value and dignity. Every child deserves an opportunity to escape poverty, neglect, violence, abuse or famine.

What we do

We create opportunities and improve the quality of life for thousands of youth and families each day by providing alternatives to incarceration, safe shelter, quality education and career development.

Where we do it

1. California
2. Arizona
3. Texas
4. Georgia
5. Florida
6. New York
7. Wisconsin
Southwest Key’s Youth Justice Programs are based on the core principle that positive change can happen through therapeutic, educational and community-based programs. By providing alternatives to children who are involved in the court or juvenile justice system, our evidence-based programs enable them to stay at home with their families and involved in their communities.

Southwest Key also provides preventative programming, community engagement and school-based programs.

92% of youth remained free of new charges while in our care.

86% of youth returned to their communities after completing our programs.
A.J.’s Story

A.J. came to the Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (JJAEP) campus in November 2018 after being expelled from high school. When he arrived, he fought the rules and tried to buck the system. However, as he adjusted to the program and began to trust the staff, he began using the program to his benefit. He began regularly attending and engaging in positive, productive conversations with staff and he was able to complete his credits for the fall semester of 2018. He even started to exceed the program requirements, putting in study hours at home in the evenings. He excelled in his Art and Government classes, completing an exceptional final project in Art that included a presentation.

As A.J. began to trust the JJAEP staff, he felt comfortable talking about his life and his future. He had an honest, mature conversation about balancing his work schedule and his school attendance. He worked with staff to create a balanced schedule that would accommodate his schoolwork and his job.

Upon returning from the winter holiday, A.J. set a personal goal to complete all the credits needed for high school graduation in Texas by spring break. He accomplished this goal and became the first student to graduate from the Bell County JJAEP. The JJAEP staff are immensely proud of A.J. for setting a goal and seeing it through. After graduation, he was working full-time and considering community college in the fall.
Southwest Key operates licensed shelters, part of a federal shelter system created as a result of the 1997 Flores Settlement Agreement. Our staff care for immigrant children under 18 years of age who arrive in this country without a parent or guardian. Our case managers work to reunify them with a parent, relative or sponsor.

The majority of those in our care are youth 13 to 17 years old from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador. During the short period of time they are with us, we work to share the building blocks for their future success.

**36 days** was the median length of stay in one of our shelters.
Maya’s Story

Maya was a shy girl of nearly 18 when she arrived at a Southwest Key shelter in the summer of 2018. Quietly relaying her story to her case manager, she told of the two-year-old daughter back home in Honduras she had to leave behind to seek work in the U.S. While traveling through Mexico with a pregnant friend, she ran out of money. A man who offered to take them the rest of the way sexually assaulted her.

Maya’s case manager recognized that this extreme form of trafficking qualified her for the federal Unaccompanied Refugee Minors (URM) program. URM status would provide Maya with a host of resources not available to other unaccompanied minors to help her deal with the trauma she endured on her journey.

Maya was thrilled when she learned she could apply for benefits in the United States to the same extent as a refugee, and she soon came out of her shell and revealed herself to be a leader among the other kids.

With Maya’s 18th birthday looming, Southwest Key staff sprang into action, helping her to apply for benefits. She was elected president of the student council, and by the time she received official URM status, Maya was regularly holding meetings for the kids to help advocate for their needs.

Maya’s URM status allowed her to be placed with a family of South American origin. She will be attending school and receiving her permit to work in the near future. She is in communication with her family in Honduras, and her URM status could mean that her daughter could come live with her in the U.S. one day.

Visit www.southwestkey.org/stories to read more stories like Maya’s.
Not all children have access to a college preparatory education. Promesa Public Schools believe that everyone deserves access to quality education. In Corpus Christi, Brownsville and Austin, we offer college preparatory curriculum with free transportation and free after-school care.

Promesas Public Schools provide students with a well-rounded education that prepares students for college and beyond.

100% of graduates who applied for college or university were accepted.
Eli’s Story

East Austin College Prep graduate, Eli Hernandez, was awarded the Rodolfo Mendez Performing/Visual Arts Scholarship from the local chapter of the League of United Latin American Citizens. The $1,000 scholarship was awarded to Eli based on his talent and achievements within the dance community. This scholarship and 14 others were awarded to East Austin youth by LULAC Council #22325, in partnership with Southwest Key Programs and El Concilio Mexican-American Land Owners de East Austin.

Eli graduated from East Austin College Prep in 2019 and now attends Stephen F. Austin University, where he is majoring in dance and minoring in Spanish. While in high school, as part of East Austin Prep’s drill team, Eli performed in the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade in 2017. He was named Tigerette MVP and Dancer of the Year while at East Austin Prep, and was also a three-time Texas Dance Educators’ Association All-State Dancer.

Eli’s award was named in honor of the late Rodolfo Mendez, an icon in the dance community of East Austin. Mendez was the founder of Ballet East Dance Theatre and was inducted into the Austin Arts Hall of Fame in recognition of nearly four decades of work in the Austin arts community. Mendez was also a personal mentor to Hernandez, making Eli a fitting recipient of this year’s Performing/Visual Arts award. The Rodolfo Mendez Performing/Visual Arts Scholarship is one of three unique scholarships awarded by LULAC Council #22325. All three are named in memory of influential figures of the East Austin community.

Visit www.southwestkey.org/stories to read more stories like Eli’s.
Workforce Development

Southwest Key Workforce Development, LLC administers Workforce Solutions (WFS) in Cameron County, TX with the goal of creating economic growth and enhancing the quality of life for job seekers, employers and members of the community who can access resources & information. This is done through the provision of childcare, education, training and employment services.

The Workforce Centers connect employers to qualified job seekers and provides retraining or skill upgrading opportunities to expand businesses via hiring events and an online statewide job matching system.

Over 1,500 were employers served.

Over 15,000 were job seekers served.
Luis’s Story

Initially, Luis came into Workforce Solutions Cameron to further his job search after experiencing many barriers and challenges. There, he received more assistance than he ever expected.

“Workforce has helped me pay for my tuition at TSTC in Harlingen. They’ve also helped with getting me necessary work uniforms and gas cards,” he said. “I’ve completed my 4-week CDL training and I’m so grateful for the opportunity to further my education and provide for my son.”

Luis was assigned a career coach to support him in searching for and beginning a new career and credits her with helping him improve his life.

“A lot of the times, people get stuck into thinking they can’t do better,” he said. “There are people out there ready to help you; all you have to do is try.”

Luis was hired full-time as a CDL Driver and is on his way to achieving his personal and professional goals.

“There are people out there ready to help you; all you have to do is try.”

Visit www.southwestkey.org/stories to read more stories like Luis’s.