



Rawhide Youth Services Receives Council on Accreditation Recognition

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NEW LONDON – Rawhide Youth Services received its Council on Accreditation (COA) October 2019, making Rawhide a premier provider to youth in residential, group and foster homes. Knowing the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) would soon require organizations like Rawhide to be recognized by an agency like COA, staff decided to start the process immediately.

“It was important for us to try to get ahead of that curve and those changes that were coming, so we could start implementing the programs and standards that would come along with that expectation,” said Heather Kahl, Rawhide’s Treatment Foster Care/Community Resource Manager.

To receive the 4-year accreditation, Rawhide had to meet over 400 standards. The long and rigorous process began in June 2018, where staff evaluated each department’s processes and procedures in comparison to COA’s standards.

“Going through this process was a great way to learn about gaps we had as an organization,” said Chris Pruitt, Rawhide’s Community Programs Development Manager.

“It gave us the opportunity to evaluate that we’re not just meeting standards and expectations, but exceeding them,” Kahl said. “We don’t want to just be mediocre; we want to be the best at what we do when supporting youth and families.”

Being accredited ensures Rawhide is operating within industry standards and has measures in place for continued monitoring of performance against those standards.

“COA provides peace of mind to our clients that they will receive the best services from experts in the field,” said Alan Loux, Rawhide’s President and CEO. “It also reassures our donating partners that their funds are being used in the most effective and efficient fashion. And to regulatory agencies, it guarantees that Rawhide is following all the laws and regulations in all of our service and business practices.” Kahl also said it’s brought a lot of focus to staff retention and support.

“When the agency has a good understanding of what their expectations are for their staff, then staff can function better in that space,” Kahl said.

While Rawhide may be accredited, the hard work for staff is not done. COA requires a Maintenance of Accreditation Report every year as well as a more extensive report every 4 years.

“It’s just another level to hold us accountable,” Kahl said. “We should constantly be revising, changing, and raising our own personal, team, and department standards as well as our agency’s standards as a whole.”

Rawhide’s President and CEO Alan Loux said he is proud of his team for achieving this great accomplishment.

“It is a testament to the great service, programs and practices that Rawhide has provided to youth and their families in Wisconsin for 55 years,” he said.

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Rawhide, Inc. is a faith-based 501(c)(3) recognized charity that offers Wisconsin’s at-risk youth and families a full array of residential and community-based services to equip them with tools to build healthy relationships and behaviors that will help them overcome life’s challenges.

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