



## Young House Family Services Agency History

Young House was founded in 1971 by Brother Bob Reinke in the form of a group home for boys in Burlington, Iowa. Brother Bob is a member of the Brothers of the Poor of St. Francis, a Catholic religious organization, and was invited to come to Burlington by the Bishop of the Diocese of Davenport. There was no money to begin the group home project; therefore, Brother Bob began with a lot of faith.

After he arrived in Burlington, Brother Bob quickly began making contacts within the community, and word was spreading about the group home project. He was contacted by someone who had a large house at 1027 North 4<sup>th</sup> Street who said he would allow Brother Bob to live there rent-free for two months. The previous owner, Dr. Young, is the namesake of the agency; Br. Bob named this first group home Young House.

He had no furniture, but during a meeting at a local bank the banker asked Brother Bob if he needed anything else, to which Brother Bob responded, "Yes--furniture." The banker made a phone call to a local furniture company (Chittendan & Eastman), and that afternoon two mattresses were delivered to the house. The Young House group home was in business—with two mattresses and a hotplate. A few days later, Brother Bob was invited to meet with Man Nordstrom, CEO of Chittendan & Eastman, to explain the group home project and furniture needs. Brother Bob told him he had no money, but a salesman took him to a show room to look at the needed furnishings. Even after Brother Bob embarrassingly continued to explain he had no money, the salesman continued to show him more and more furniture. Returning to Mr. Nordstrom's office, Brother Bob said, "There must be some misunderstanding. I have no money." Mr. Nordstrom looked at him and said, "We know that. We're giving you the furniture."

That evening during his prayer time, Brother Bob asked God for a foundational scripture for the agency. He randomly opened his Bible to the scripture passage in Luke 9:48. This Bible verse was developed into the agency's mission statement, "Christ's statement as quoted in Luke 9:48, "**The person who in My name welcomes this child, welcomes Me. . .**" embodies the spirit of Young House Family Services. Our special mission is to serve Christ by offering a wide range of human services designed to provide for the spiritual, physical, and emotional care of children and families."

God used many people and businesses in Burlington to bless Brother Bob and the humble beginnings of Young House. In the early years, Brother Bob recruited several other members of the Brothers of the Poor of St. Francis to help him staff the group home. Later, he invited Sisters from the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ to assist with the girls' group homes. The Brothers and Sisters played a vital role in getting the group homes established, and they still continue to be supportive of the agency.

As the ministry grew, the name was changed to Young House Family Services in the mid-1980's to reflect the expanding services being offered. In 1988 Brother Bob left Burlington for a ministry in New Jersey. Jack Escorcia was named Administrator on January 1, 1988. Jack had worked for Young House for 12 years, and has carried on the mission of the agency that was established by Brother Bob.

Today Young House Family Services is a comprehensive non-profit social service agency with over 150 employees and a wide variety of programs throughout Southeast Iowa. Most of our clients are referred through the Department of Human Services, Juvenile Court Services, or area schools. We have several programs which are grant-funded, and some services are provided to clients on a sliding fee scale.