

# Preventing Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment at Rising Ground's Juvenile Justice Facilities

## Annual Report

*Compliance with the 2003 National Prison Rape  
Elimination Act (PREA)*



**January to December 2022**

## PURPOSE

Rising Ground's Limited Secure Placement programs (LSP) are juvenile justice programs for youth who have been adjudicated as juvenile delinquents in New York City Family Court. Our LSPs are responsible for ensuring youth are safe and to provide a strength-based program to youth, giving them the tools and education needed to make positive choices and break cycles of incarceration and recidivism. Rising Ground is committed to meeting the requirements of the 2003 [Prison Rape Elimination Act \(PREA\)](#) and ensuring all youth are safe and free from sexual abuse and harassment. This report outlines how Rising Ground is responding to the PREA requirements and promoting safety for all youth.

## ABOUT RISING GROUND

Founded as an orphanage in 1831, Rising Ground has been at the forefront of evolving community needs. We are a leader in utilizing result-driven, trauma-informed, evidence-based practices. Today, our work is a positive force in the lives of more than 25,000 individuals annually.

**Our Mission:** Driven by the belief that each of us can thrive when life has hope and opportunity, Rising Ground provides caring support and proven paths to positive change, helping children, adults, and families rise above adversity.

**Our Vision:** Rising Ground envisions a future for New York where every child has an equal opportunity to succeed; where vulnerable individuals and families have the resources and support, they need; where people with disabilities can access opportunity and fully participate in their communities; and where all are supported as they navigate life's challenges and positively direct their lives.

**Our values:** Rooted in an unshakeable belief in every individual's ability to change and grow, we value Accountability, Connection, Tenacity, and Service as we help children, adults, and families pursue their dreams and goals.

Definitions of the four values encompass the following:

- Accountability – ethical behavior; personal responsibility; accountability to others, clients, and staff; integrity; fiduciary responsibility
- Connection – connection to families, community, the organization, and each other; communication; collaboration; engagement; teamwork
- Tenacity – grit; never giving up; creativity; commitment; smart thinkers; spunk; initiative; drive; dedicated to overcoming obstacles; resourcefulness

- Service – respect for others and the work itself; client – focused efforts; compassion; support

Rising Ground operates two Limited Secure Placement (LSP) programs through contracts with NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS). Youth are placed in LSP by family court judges due to a juvenile delinquency finding.

## **PREA IMPLEMENTATION**

This year we continued to focus on PREA implementation and working through our implementation plan to ensure each component of PREA is fully in practice. Our multi-disciplinary implementation workgroup continued to meet regularly throughout the year. The consultant provided a two-day PREA standards training for LSP managers and clinical team members to take a deep dive into the standards as well as Rising Grounds PREA practices.

## **PREA COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES**

Throughout the year, the agency continued its efforts to meet the requirements of PREA. While our efforts have been quite comprehensive, a few of the activities are noted below:

- Published our second Annual Report on our website for 2021.
- Held staffing plan review meetings, mix of virtual and on site for both Ryer and Carroll St. LSPs
- Updated staff training that expanded on First Responder Duties in responding to allegations of sexual abuse and sexual harassment and trained staff on our Coordinated Response Protocols.
- Trained our volunteers, interns, and consultants on the PREA Law, how to identify signs of sexual abuse, signs of sexual harassment, mandated reporting and how to respond.
- Corresponded with NYC Department of Education and NYC Administration for Children's Services regarding staff clearances from their agencies.
- Updated compliance check lists for PREA Coordinator site visits that take place monthly and quarterly to support PREA compliance and find and address any deficiencies.
- Added 3 cameras at Ryer to ensure there are no blind spots: 92 in total.
- Created compliance check lists for the Clinical Director's site visits that began quarterly to support PREA compliance and find and address any deficiencies.



- Finalized a new victimization screening tool that added more youth education materials to the youth handbook.
- Mock Audit conducted in January 2022. As a result, updated our parent and family manuals as well as revised the youth personal Safety pamphlet to better reflect standard 115.333
- Updated the quarterly refresher training for youth to be conducted during group meetings with the assistance of a clinical team member.

## FACILITIES

Rising Ground has two LSP programs that are considered juvenile justice facilities under the PREA standards according to Rising Ground's oversight agency, NYC Administration for Children's Services.

Ryer LSP is a four-story building with a functional basement located in the Fordham Heights section of the Bronx. There are two stairways and an elevator that all provide access to all levels of the building. There is camera coverage throughout the building – resulting in over 92 cameras inside and out. It is an all-female/female identifying facility that houses youth ages 13 to 21.

Carroll St. LSP is four-story building with a cellar located in the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn. There are two stairways providing access to all levels of the building. There is camera coverage throughout the building – resulting in 98 cameras inside and out. It is an all-male/male identifying LSP that houses youth ages 13-21.

## SEXUAL ABUSE & SEXUAL HARASSMENT ALLEGATIONS DATA

### Ryer LSP

	Sexual Abuse			
	Youth on Youth		Staff on Youth	
	Allegations (A)	Substantiated (S)	Allegations (A)	Substantiated (S)
<b>2022</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>2021</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>2020</b>	1	0	1	0
<b>2019</b>	0	0	0	0

**Carroll St**

	<b>Sexual Abuse</b>			
	<i>Youth on Youth</i>		<i>Staff on Youth</i>	
	Allegations (A)	Substantiated (S)	Allegations (A)	Substantiated (S)
<b>2022</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>2021</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>2020</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>2019</b>	0	0	0	0

**Conclusion**

Throughout the year we continued our dedicated efforts to fully implement PREA so that we may become fully compliant with the federal regulations. As noted in this report, efforts continue to be made across the various standards addressing training, staffing, and reporting. With even more areas to report misconduct, we had zero PREA incidents. We have made a significant amount of progress over the past three years and will continue efforts in the coming year.



Luis Pagan

PREA Coordinator



Alan Mucatel

Chief Executive Officer