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September 20, 2021

Mr. Marcus Amman  
Story County Planning and Development  
900 6<sup>th</sup> Street  
Nevada, IA 50201



Re: Conditional Use Permit for the Central Iowa  
YSS Youth Recovery Campus  
Statement of Justification

Mr. Amman,

YSS seeks to create a best-in-class recovery campus to provide crisis stabilization, youth shelters and adolescent addictions treatment.

With a 45-year history of creating hope and opportunity by putting kids first, YSS has provided safe spaces to nearly 5,000 youth across the state. YSS is headquartered in Ames, with additional community-based centers located in Boone, Des Moines, Marshalltown, Mason City, and Webster City. Each location offers myriad programs and services focused around building healthy minds and bodies in Iowa's youth through shelter, treatment, and counseling.

Now, YSS is building on this foundation and looking to expand its impact to even more youth. For the past five years, YSS has been quietly fundraising to build the recovery campus, which will serve as Iowa's first nature-based shelter and treatment facility capable of providing a full continuum of care to Iowa's kids and young adults. The combined support of our dedicated donors, Governor Kim Reynolds, and Director of Iowa Health and Human Services Kelly Garcia culminated in a transformational investment by CICS—and today, YSS is ready to bring our vision to life.

Our campus is unlike anything else offered in the state of Iowa and will provide the following:

- Core treatment and therapy that is customized to individual needs, family-focused, gender/age appropriate, and holistically informed (mind/body/spirit)
- Integrated experiential opportunities
- Recovery school
- Trauma informed care
- Strong transitional component

If the measure of any society is determined by how we treat our most vulnerable, the campus is the standard we want to set. In the short-term, we provide much-needed mental health and treatment services in the heart of our state, bring updated facilities to long-established and necessary programs, and create more than 50 full-time and part-time jobs in the area. These employees bring immediate economic vitality to the region by supporting retail, renting apartments, and buying houses.

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In the long-term, this is the first step in creating a full-continuum facility that helps our kids stay sober and committed past their graduation date. YSS continues to raise funds to renovate and repurpose our existing facilities into a sober living community. Upon graduation from the campus, graduates can choose to move to our sober living community instead of returning to their former peer groups and negative environments. Instead of returning from an out-of-state treatment program—isolated and unsupported—graduates would be surrounded by fellow program peers, all committed to continuing their sobriety journeys.

We know if an individual suffering from a substance use disorder (SUD) can stay sober for one year, the likelihood of relapse is just 50%. The long-term societal benefits of helping Iowa's youth stay sober for longer is immeasurable. It is currently estimated that the annual economic cost and societal harm of alcoholism and addiction is \$1.45 trillion in the United States.

## YSS RESPONSE TO COMMUNITY QUESTIONS

*Could you speak more about the service this provides to the community in terms of providing needed mental health beds and mental health care?*

We know every year, more than 7,000 youth in the state of Iowa don't get the SUD treatment they need. Behavioral health is the intersection of mental health and substance use disorder, and our program supports dual diagnosis. Each individual admitted to a bed within our residential addiction treatment program will receive mental health care, including therapy, counseling, support, and treatment.

Similarly, those in Crisis Stabilization and Emergency Shelter almost always have a presenting mental health need. Our program will provide initial assessment/diagnosis and create mental health treatment plans that begin on campus and continue as our clients discharge.

Our current design drafts contain space for up to 70 beds. At almost double our current capacity, the campus has the potential to serve hundreds of kids each year, capable of making a transformational impact on the thousands of youths who need this support and treatment.

*Do you have any numbers on cost-savings for emergency rooms and hospitals?*

As YSS is not a medical-services provider for emergency rooms/hospitals, we do not have access to these numbers. We can say that the adolescent psychiatry beds across the state are full, meaning many youth presenting to a hospital must sit in an emergency room for several hours (and sometimes up to several days) waiting for an opening. Although the campus will not provide in-patient/hospital level of care, we will divert individuals from the emergency room when appropriate, and we will accept individuals coming out of in-patient settings as they transition into longer-term treatment programs offered by YSS. This collaboration will help alleviate the increasing pressure on our emergency rooms and hospitals.

*We have received comments about YSS not paying taxes as a non-profit.*

As a 501(c)3, YSS is exempt from federal income taxes. However, the payroll taxes for campus employees alone will far exceed any existing tax benefit the land is currently generating (in the last year

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taxes were collected for this parcel of land, the total was \$910). Additionally, when our employees, clients, and families buy gas, pay their rent or mortgage, and go out for dinner, they will be contributing to Story County's economy on a large scale.

## PROGRAMMING AND FACILITIES

### PROGRAM PHASES FOR CLIENTS

**Phase I - Stabilization:** Designed to create a safe and secure environment to assist the youth in stabilizing and preparing them for the first steps toward recovery.

**Phase II - Primary Treatment:** Expands upon the youth's commitment to recovery as the focus shifts toward putting the plan into action and strengthening support systems to nurture long-term recovery. Focus and intensity will be directed toward family/adult support, education, spirituality, wellness, and nutrition.

**Phase III - Transition:** Opportunity for youth to live in a recovery home and participate in a sober lifestyle. Youth will be actively engaged and participate in school, employment, and/or volunteering a minimum of 32 hours a week.

### CLIENT ACCESS

- Clients are selected based upon referral and application
- Clients will stay from four weeks to four months, on average
- Clients are supervised at all times
- Clients who leave the campus will be accompanied by a staff or other identified support person
- The building will have monitored entry/exit points. Clients will remain in the facility or on the confines of campus unless accompanied by staff.
- The outside of the perimeter does not have fencing. It will be natural separation from contiguous properties.

### CLIENT TYPICAL DAY

Our students' daily routine is normalized and strength-based, including daily education, appropriate recreation, and a focus on well-being through therapeutic and vocational strategies to support recovery and permanency achievement. Specific examples are provided below.

- Clients will have a home-like setting for sleeping and interacting with other roommates in a small living area (approximately eight clients per pod)
- Each living space will share a lounge/TV room, and clients will have access to a cafeteria, gym, classroom, and counseling rooms
- During the day, clients will go from their living area to the central area for classes, counseling, recreation, arts, etc.
- Outside supervised activities may include walking, hiking, running, gardening, yoga, or playing intramural activities
- Parents and visiting family members may come for family counseling and to visit clients during their stay

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## SCHOOL

- Clients attend school on a daily basis in alignment with the school district schedule
- Clients have an individualized school plan that allows them to continue to earn credits and stay aligned with their current grade and education plan

*School personnel are employed by the local school district or Area Education Agency. YSS works closely with those entities to provide space, equipment, and other items necessary to facilitate the educational environment for each individual youth. Students' educational advancement aligns with the Department of Education and Community School District guidelines. YSS will work in collaboration with our local school district to create individualized standards of achievement.*

## ASSESSMENT AND ADMISSIONS

**Emergency Services:** Eligibility and intake information is collected in a manner that identifies the strengths, needs, abilities, and preferences of the adolescent served and includes a Department of Human Services Screening Tool. This data may be gathered from the adolescent, family members, and referral worker. Staff will document eligibility information with the referral source to ensure that appropriate services are provided. Referral agencies may include court order or law enforcement placement, Department of Human Services, Juvenile Court Services, parent/guardian placement, or a crisis stabilization request.

Eligibility criteria:

- Adolescent(s) must be between the ages of 12-17 years
- There will be no distinction among adolescents on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, sex, gender identity, national origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or physical or mental disability
- Adolescents with disabilities are accepted, but will need to be screened to determine if our facilities have the proper accommodations
- The appropriate "gender bed" must be available for sleeping accommodations

No bed can be "held" prior to admission. There is also no waitlist for placement, and all referrals will be admitted on a first-come, first-served basis.

**Residential Services:** Adolescents are referred to residential treatment from various referral sources, including Juvenile Court Services, outpatient treatment programs, hospitals, schools, and family members. When releases of information have been signed by the adolescent, communication with the referral source is important to gather collateral information as well as keep the referral source informed of the adolescent's progress. Regardless of the referral source, all adolescents are treated equally.

Residential treatment is available to youth aged 14 to 22 (or as determined clinically appropriate), diagnosed with a qualifying substance use disorder utilizing the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) criteria.

The residential programs incorporate gender responsive, trauma informed, evidence-based practices, which include Motivational Enhancement Therapy using Motivational Interviewing, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Aggression Replacement Training (A.R.T.), Multi-Dimensional Family Therapy (MDFT), and the MANDT System®. A variety of treatment modalities are utilized, including individual and group therapy

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sessions and skill development groups, based upon what is clinically determined to best serve the needs of everyone.

The goal of the treatment program is to encourage behavioral, emotional, and cognitive change in the adolescents served as well as in the family and social environment. Specifically, improvement in destructive behaviors and problems associated with conduct, mood, affect, adjustment, impulse control, and other mental health disorders. Therapists, counselors, and youth recovery specialists play an integral part in assisting the adolescents and their families during the recovery process.

In all programs, YSS seeks to create a welcoming, homelike atmosphere to give youth a strong sense of worth and security. We also strive to provide space for a variety of experiential therapy and recreation opportunities. With these goals in mind, we've examined approximately 15 sites around Iowa to determine the best fit for our facility.

In 2019, we accepted a gracious donation of three contiguous parcels with over 52 acres of land from Dr. Jay Brown located in Story County, southwest of the city of Cambridge on 580<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The primary parcel is bisected by a small stream, and all three parcels contain woodlands and prairie. The natural elements of the site and its peaceful surroundings were the deciding factors for YSS to move forward with development of this site.

The following information addresses the six items outlined in Section 90.04 "Standards for Approval" in the current Story County Code of Ordinances for justification of our request for a Conditional Use Permit to allow for our new facility to be built upon this property within Story County.

## **FACILITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

The overall 52.49-Acre site is outlined in blue on the following page. The proposed "Building & Parking Location" area is designated within the red dashed line. Areas outside of this area within the site are planned to primarily remain in their natural state and will be used for YSS programs. There are no current plans to carve out acreage for non-YSS use.

A conceptual site plan has been developed and is attached. YSS will meet and review this plan with Story County staff, committees, and boards as well as adjacent property owners. Feedback from these meetings will be considered and incorporated into the final design as much as possible. A full site plan will be submitted for review once design development is complete (estimated to be in February 2022).

The buildings, drives, parking, and loading areas will be constructed in one phase with most of the work in the "Building & Parking Location" designation. Experimental Therapy Areas are planned as shown on the conceptual site plan. Optional facility additions may be constructed as programming and funding allows.



Facility Development Plan	
<p><b>Minimum Construction Needs (2023):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Up to 70 bed facility and living space               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Classrooms</li> <li>● Kitchen/cafeteria</li> <li>● Gym</li> <li>● Administrative offices</li> <li>● Parent visiting spaces</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Experiential Therapy Areas               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Agricultural area</li> <li>● Sports field &amp; recreation area</li> <li>● Hiking path</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Optional Facility Additions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Gardening Shed</li> <li>○ Equine Therapy</li> <li>○ Meeting Pavilion</li> </ul>

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## COMPATIBILITY

The total site—comprised of parcels 1429200460, 1429200305, and 1429400105—is approximately 52.49 acres (2,286,359 square feet), including county road easement for 580<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The site currently contains a storage building located 200 ft. west of 580<sup>th</sup> Avenue and a small rental home further west approximately 500 ft. from 580<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The existing storage building will be relocated further west on the site and will no longer be visible from the road right of way. The existing home will be removed. The conceptual buildings' gross area is approximately 43,200 square feet, which is 1.9% of the total site area. The buildings will be located to disturb as few natural resources as possible on the south side of the creek, outside of the 100-year flood limits and wetland areas. Buildings will be one-story and may have a walk-out basement where the landscape and programming allow.

Building and built amenity accessories will be built in scale, material, and character that is contextually appropriate and compatible to existing structures and functioning uses/activities. Designs will aim to become an integrated extension of the property's natural setting and features.

## TRANSITION

Trees, grasses, and the natural site grade will buffer the view of the buildings and parking/loading areas from surrounding properties as well as 580<sup>th</sup> Avenue, which will minimize visual and audible intrusions to surrounding properties. Any additional landscaping is planned to be reflective of the natural character of the site and surroundings and will compliment programming needs. The buildings, drives, parking, and loading areas will meet all required setbacks and will be sited approximately 900 ft. west of 580<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

## TRAFFIC

Vehicular and pedestrian movement into and within the development will incorporate necessary design and engineering standards to assure proper ingress/egress functionality; support for health, safety, and emergency services; long-term maintenance; and integration into the existing roadway system. Access to the site from 580<sup>th</sup> Avenue will be located near the existing driveway and will be designed to Story County standards.

A traffic impact letter was completed by Clapsaddle-Garber Associates on Aug. 16, 2021 to examine impacts the development may have on 580<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Information regarding daily and peak hour trips to the site are summarized in this report. YSS will pay for yearly dust control in front of all homes on 580<sup>th</sup> Avenue to mitigate the increase in traffic on the roadway.

## PARKING AND LOADING

Parking will be provided on site per the Story County code. Parking layouts and orientations will minimize the impacts of vehicular lights, glare, and noise onto adjacent properties and internal development functions. Delivery and utility service vehicles will be provided with separate parking/loading areas from

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general parking and screened from adjacent properties and internal activity areas. Landscaping will be provided around all buildings and parking areas.

## **SIGNS AND LIGHTING**

There will be discreet signage near 580<sup>th</sup> Avenue to allow for clients, parents, and staff to identify the facility entrance drive. Entrance signage may be a landscaped monument sign or an appropriately sized wooden sign. Site signage will be primarily for internal wayfinding, building/activity identification, and safety/security. Signage design and material will be compatible with the overall character of the site as appropriate. All signage will be in accordance with Story County code.

An overall lighting strategy will evaluate the incorporation of Dark Sky goals and standards along with the Illuminating Engineering Society's proposed Model Lighting Ordinance guidelines regarding light spillage, light trespass, skyglow reduction, and energy conservation. Exterior lighting will be provided as required for ingress/egress and safety/security.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

Our proposed project will preserve the existing woodland and prairie on the parcels as much as possible to create a warm, safe, and welcoming space for clients and their families, in addition to maintaining visual appeal for the neighbors. Current hardwoods will be preserved on-site as outlined in a Timber Management Plan being developed with the assistance of Story County Conservation. The development's conceptual organizational plan reflects an understanding and sensitivity to existing adjacent and adjoining properties, minimizing visual and audible intrusions with thoughtful siting and orientation, and utilizing existing natural features (topography, vegetation, streams, etc.) as buffers. Any additional landscape buffers added will utilize planting materials compatible with the current native character of the site. YSS granted a Conservation Easement to Story County Conservation on September 14, 2021 that encompasses over 29 acres of the total property (40%) to preserve significant natural and scenic value of the site.

The proposed development will disturb approximately 10 acres south of the creek. Work in the floodplain or crossing of the creek is not anticipated at this time. Subsequent phases may include a small bridge over the creek and trails throughout the property as noted.

Stormwater management/treatment will be provided on site in two locations. The primary pond will be located between the proposed impervious areas and the creek per the county code and will be designed to complement the natural landscape and outdoor activity space. In addition, a second dry pond will be located at the east end of the site to manage runoff from the proposed driveway.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **SCHEDULE**

Construction is planned to begin with minimal clearing and early site preparation in fall 2021 to protect potential habitat in the area. The majority of the work is scheduled to begin after site plan approval in

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spring 2022, and all buildings and site improvements will be completed by August 2023. The facility will open with outdoor programming including an agricultural area, sports field, recreation area, and hiking paths. Additional outdoor programming may be implemented in the future as therapeutic interventions are explored and potentially adopted. The timing of these programs is not definitive.

### **FACILITY CAPACITY**

This facility will welcome an anticipated 220 clients each year, with a maximum of 70 clients at any one time. One staff member will be present for every five clients, in addition to administrative staff during daytime hours. A minimum of one staff member will be present for every eight clients overnight during sleeping hours. Therefore, a maximum of 100 total occupants will be on site from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

### **FUNDING**

- YSS funding to build this site is based on grants, donations, and current holdings
- The day-to-day operations will be paid for by private pay, private insurance, and Medicaid, much like our current operations
- Optional facility additions may be added as YSS receives more donations

### **MONITORING AGENCIES**

YSS is monitored by the Department of Human Services, Department of Inspections and Appeals, and Iowa Department of Public Health and is nationally accredited by CARF International. CARF promotes the quality, value, and optimal outcomes of services through a consultative accreditation process and continuous improvement services that center on enhancing the lives of persons served.

### **ELOPEMENT**

At times, youth have left YSS facilities—typically for a few hours but could be overnight. Each time a client leaves the property, YSS calls emergency services and files a missing person’s report. Therapeutic interventions are evaluated, and the individual’s treatment plan is adjusted if these incidents occur.

YSS understands the path to recovery is unique to each individual, which is why the recovery campus will be a volunteer program with unlocked facilities. The average age of clients is 15 years old—these are adolescents who simply need help getting back on their feet and are committed to the recovery process. YSS ensures the surrounding community will feel safe and uplifted with the addition of the campus.