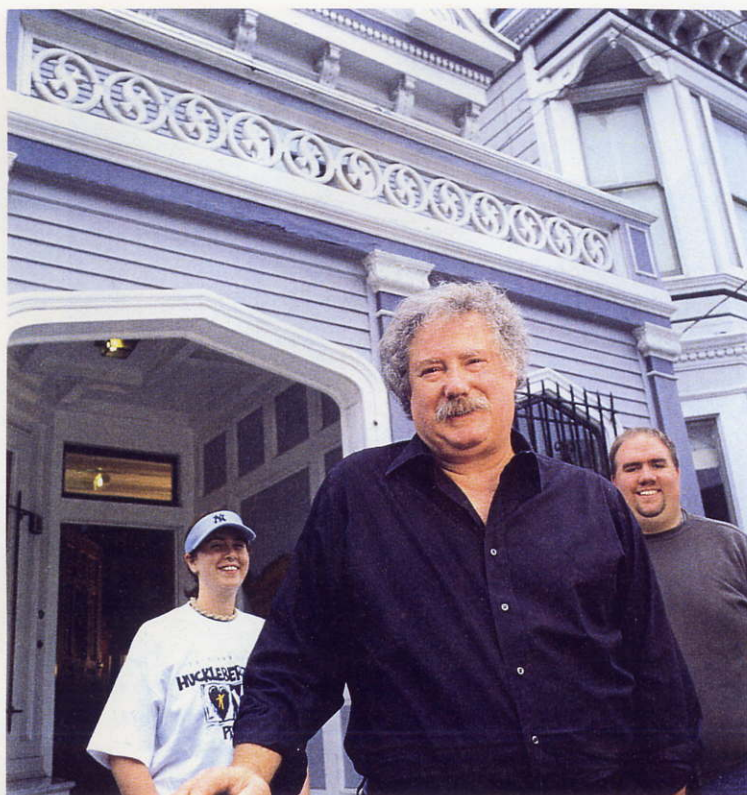


# Harvard Law

BULLETIN

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Seth Arfornado

Bruce Fisher '69 joins staff members at the Huckleberry House, which offers emergency shelter and services to runaway and homeless youths.

## SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR

BRUCE FISHER '69 MANAGES A GROWTH FUND, but he's not on Wall Street. Instead, he raises money for human capital. And he believes it's the best investment anyone can make.

As executive director of Huckleberry Youth Programs in San Francisco, Fisher keeps the agency going—and growing. But for nonprofit organizations like Huckleberry, one of the largest youth agencies in the city with more than 6,000 clients a year, the biggest challenge is finding enough money.

"When I create a program, I have a vision without money," said Fisher. "It's quite a challenge. I call it social entrepreneurship."

Fisher's interest in public service developed during a time of social activism at HLS, when he wrote his third-year paper on programs in Boston for juveniles on probation. He has been an activist since, organizing a tenants' union, teaching, and working in the private

sector and in the government on issues of juvenile justice, child abuse, and runaway youth. At Huckleberry, Fisher raises the agency's \$5 million budget by writing grants and soliciting donations, and through contracts from the city. When funding is not immediately available, he creates programs first and then searches for the money to pay for them.

"I take the most pleasure in developing new programs," he said. "You look back two years ago where there was nothing—now there is a program serving 2,000 young people."

Under his direction, Huckleberry was one of the first agencies to establish adolescent health care centers. These clinics, used as models nationwide, provide reproductive health care and HIV and pregnancy testing as well as medical exams. Another program, the community assessment center, keeps about 800 youths a year in the social service system and out of jail,

according to Fisher. "People think you need to be tough on juvenile delinquents, but most of our kids are just trying to stay in school and go on to college," he said.

In order to keep programs available for teens, Fisher and a colleague formed the San Francisco Human Services Network, an association of more than 70 nonprofit human service providers. The organization hopes to enact legislation that will allow nonprofits to help set priorities and shape city policy on human service funding. The nonprofit community in the Bay Area provides \$750 million worth of services, according to studies from San Francisco State University, but has no say in how the city budget is allocated. "For the first time, this new organization will create a dialogue that lets decision makers know what the needs are in this community," he said.

The network already has seen results. When the city mandated that nonprofits raise wages for its employees, it also agreed to give contracts that paid for the increase. Fisher sees these strides as crucial not only for Huckleberry Youth Programs and other local nonprofits, but for nonprofits nationwide. "Some people are suggesting that this is unique in the country," he said. "We would have a fantastic influence if we get the voice."

—Robin Robinson