



LOCAL FOUNDATIONS PLEDGE \$450,000 TO BOLSTER SERVICES FOR HOMELESS YOUTH IN KING COUNTY

Grant from the Raikes Foundation, Ballmer Family Giving and Thomas V. Giddens, Jr. Foundation helps fill gap in federal funding for street outreach

SEATTLE, WA -- January 21, 2014 – Alarmed by cuts in federal funding for critical services to prevent and end youth homelessness in King County, three Seattle-based philanthropies have committed \$450,000 to help bridge the gap.

The grant from the Raikes Foundation, Ballmer Family Giving and the Thomas J. Giddens Foundation will be allocated in 2014 to Auburn Youth Resources, Friends of Youth and YouthCare, three of the region's leading providers of services for runaway and homeless youth.

The primary purpose of the grant is to fund street outreach programs in 24 cities, as well as drop-in services provided by Auburn Youth Services, Friends of Youth and YouthCare. These proactive services are a vital way for providers to locate, support and build connections to homeless or unstably housed young people, many of whom are reluctant to seek help or don't know where to turn.

The United Way of King County previously pledged an additional \$100,000 to help fund outreach and drop-in services.

Whether conducted by mobile teams driving to areas where homeless young people congregate in East or South King County, or by counselors talking with kids in downtown Seattle parks, outreach programs enable service providers to help meet the basic needs of young people while they work to get them off the streets. Family reunification services are pursued whenever possible.

Over 5,000 unaccompanied youth and youth adults in King County experience homelessness every year, and on any given night over 700 young people are homeless or unstably housed – including over 100 sleeping in parks, abandoned buildings or under bridges.

“The young people we serve in South King County are spread across a huge area, and many are hesitant to ask for help – particularly if they have had bad experiences with adults,” said Jim Blanchard, executive director of Auburn Youth Resources. “Our mobile outreach teams provide a vital first point-of-contact and enable us to get young people the help they need.”

There are homeless youth in every zip code in King County,” said Terry Pottmeyer, president and CEO of Friends of Youth. “Our mobile outreach team finds youth sleeping in parks, camping in the woods, and trying to stay warm at the library. We are so grateful for the support of the Giddens, Ballmer and Raikes Foundation for keeping our team on the road and the lights on at our Drop In Center. With their support, and the continued support of United Way, we know that tonight, and every night, homeless youth in our community have a safe way off the streets.”



“Outreach and drop-in services act as the front door into the many other services provided at each of our agencies,” said Melinda Giovengo, executive director of YouthCare. “Our skilled outreach workers not only earn the trust of young people still on the streets, they help them meet basic needs for food, clothing, and a caring adult to talk to. Through this connection, they help young people enroll in case management, find safe shelter or housing, reunify with their families if that’s safe to do, reconnect to their education, and more. Our outreach teams are critical to the success of our entire continuum of services for homeless youth and young adults in King County.”

“We are honored to join with Ballmer Family Giving and the Giddens Foundation to help sustain these vital outreach services for homeless youth,” said Tricia Raikes, co-founder of the Raikes Foundation. “Federal, state and local funding is essential to maintain these services over the long-term, but we are glad we can help limit the fallout caused by recent cutbacks.”

Since 2011, a diverse mix of more than 100 local stakeholders – including private and public funders, service providers, advocates, and current and former homeless youth – has been working together with the Committee to End Homelessness to prioritize ending youth homelessness in King County.

Last August, the effort produced the *Comprehensive Plan to Prevent and End Youth and Young Adult Homelessness in King County by 2020*, which outlines a series of priority recommendations including new efforts in prevention, education, employment and housing.

In November the King County Council approved more than \$900,000 to help fund the plan.

In all, more than \$5 million has been committed to this effort in the past two years, including more than \$3 million from private sources.

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