

FRIENDS OF YOUTH FORUM



OUR MISSION

Friends of Youth delivers a broad range of services to youth and their families to improve their emotional stability and self-sufficiency.

OUR VISION

Friends of Youth envisions all youth having every opportunity to succeed.

Meet Our Partner, Issaquah School District

Friends of Youth has partnered with the Issaquah School District to institute a pilot program focused on developing a safe, respectful and responsible environment that empowers the well-being of our youth at Issaquah Valley Elementary School. This new program has placed a trained mental health counselor, Vidya Subramain, to support the kids in a multitude of ways. She offers one-on-one counseling to the kids to help with issues such as depression, anxiety or social conflict, provides crisis help with behavioral outbursts in the classrooms, provides consultation and education to the school's staff, partners students together in a 'buddy' program to help them support each other, and has created a new parenting class series with the support of the school staff.

The five-week parenting class series has been a huge success with full attendance by parents and caregivers. The school staff has participated in co-teaching the material and sharing their experiences. The school has coordinated childcare with middle school volunteers and the community has donated books and food for families to utilize in their homes.

Parents and Caregivers learn practical and logical techniques for turning around misbehaviors in their children, explore new ways of creating healthy relationships, minimizing power-struggles and ease tension, and discover ways to introduce positive discipline in their homes. The classes provide opportunities for parents to discuss and share experiences. They are able to learn what's working for others as they try out the ideas developed in the class and create positive changes in their family dynamics.

HOWARD HOUSE

Our Foster Care Home



Edmundo, our Foster Parent, in front of Howard House

Every child needs and deserves a safe and nurturing environment. Our Foster Care program consists of two populations: Behavioral Rehabilitation Services (BRS youth in state foster care) and Division of Children Services (DCS refugee and unaccompanied youth). Each child receives a service plan tailored to their physical, emotional, and social needs in order to help them succeed. Youth are placed in a foster home with at least one foster parent dedicated to supporting the youth and receive services from a Master level Case Manager and Case Aide.

Meet Our Foster Parents

Edmundo and Paula have been Therapeutic Foster Parents since July 2014. They foster four youth who currently reside in our Howard House home located in Renton. As part of their foster parenting care, they enroll youth in school,

take them to medical appointments, assist in their extracurricular activities/sports, teach them independent living skills (chores, laundry, budgeting), and enjoy family outings.

Foster Youth In Care

Andrew, a sixteen year old youth came into foster care due to a family crisis. Andrew has been residing in the Howard House home for about two months. He is currently working on family reunification and is rebuilding a relationship with his parents. Andrew stated "this home is one of the best things that has happened to me". Stephen, a fifteen year old youth, has been living in the Howard House home for almost three weeks. Most of his childhood was full of abuse and neglect. Before being placed in a Foster Home, Stephen was bouncing around from placement to placement. Stephen was not sure about living in a foster home, but enthusiastically states he "likes being in a home with other youth and really enjoys the view of Lake Washington". Juan, a seventeen year old with no legal guardian nor family, came to the United States as an unaccompanied minor. He has lived in the Howard House home for about eight months and does a great job with helping the other youth feel welcome. The fourth youth, Jay, is a refugee who fled his country due to extreme violence. He has been living in the Howard House home for three months and is very grateful for an opportunity to obtain his education.

OUR SUPERHERO VOLUNTEERS

This year we had over 350 volunteers and 46 different volunteer groups supporting our 25 different service programs - this is phenomenal community support. There is not much our volunteers will not do. Their activities range from painting and furniture building to planting gardens and cooking meals.

While our Superhero Volunteers engage in much that involves housing needs, they too can be found playing holiday elves. There is no doubt that our most successful volunteer event

this past year was our Giving Tree Program supported by hundreds of our volunteers across 43 host sites serving as Friends of Youth ambassadors for our gift drives.

In honor of our Superhero's, we will be hosting a volunteer appreciation event on Tuesday, April 14th to celebrate and acknowledge the remarkable work our volunteers do! We could not do without the support of our superhero volunteers. Way to Go!

WORDS FROM OUR CEO *Looking Ahead*

Partners, partnerships, as you read through this newsletter you will see these terms used repeatedly. They are the manifestation of a key value we hold dear: "Collaboration" Together, we celebrate the successes of our youth as you will read in the recap of our 10th Annual Celebration of Youth. Working together with community partners like the Issaquah School District, allows us to combine resources that help students succeed in class, and families succeed at home.

You will read how many individuals, teams and organizations across the Puget Sound area gathered one night to count the number of people who are living on the streets, or are so marginally housed they did not know where they would sleep the next night. This includes the count of youth and young adults who are experiencing homelessness. Equally important, these community partners bear witness to the youth and young adults living within our community, ensuring they are seen.

Our community partnerships with wonderful organizations like National Charity League provide resources that help youth navigate their way to safe, stable places, support programs that guide their next step forward, and provide gifts that let them know they are valued.

At Friends of Youth, we know we have a big job, and a very important job, providing a broad range of services to youth and their families that improve their emotional stability and self-sufficiency. We envision a community where all youth have every opportunity to succeed in life. And we know we cannot do it alone. We need you as our partner! ~Nancy

BUILDING THE FUTURE ONE STEP AT A TIME WITH OUR YOUTH Client Perspective

We had a successful 10th Annual Celebration of Youth Luncheon with nearly 500 attendees and increased funds raised from the year prior. This year's theme, "Building the Future" was made evident when our former client, Gregory Benson shared his compelling story.

Gregory graciously shared how Friends of Youth helped "bridged the gap between his stages of life" and provided him help at the right time. He bravely stated that "after a community involved life, addiction entered my life as a phenomenon during late high school and culminated quickly after a year and a half into a psychotic event that led me to a manic departure". He found himself homeless as a result and sought out shelter at The Landing where he received care that led to recovery, reunification with his family and employment. Later, becoming a volunteer at Friends of



Youth and then an employee, he indicated that "the integrity and vision within the organization drew me in and kept me interested. It allowed me to transition from a simple focus of food and shelter, and guided me into a path of growth".

Today his perspective is one where "faith, family, freedom, finance, and fitness" are the core values which guide his life. Integrity is important to him and found that "the people within Friends of Youth modeled integrity" and because of this, inspired in him vision. He is thankful for Friends of Youth and feels that "if his potential now speaks to building a future", then a future he must build. Our work continues!

2015 COUNT US IN RESULTS

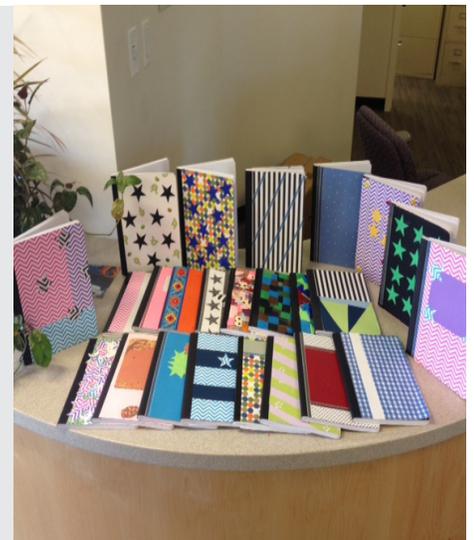
On January 22nd, providers and community partners across King County participated in the annual Count Us In effort to get a clear understanding of how many young people are living through homelessness or struggling with unstable housing. Friends of Youth has been a partner in this effort since the count began five years ago. Count Us In partners with the annual One Night Count which gathers the overall numbers of people experiencing homelessness in King County.

This year's One Night Count showed a 20 percent increase in the number of people living on the street. In contrast, Count Us In volunteers recorded 824 homeless or unstably housed youth, a number that, while up a bit, has held remarkably steady for the last three years. In 2013, Count Us In volunteers recorded 778 youth and young adults; in 2014, they counted 779.

As the community moves forward with its planning efforts to end youth homelessness, this count serves a timely reminder of the urgency with which we need to be providing support and positive solutions for each and every young person that is experiencing homelessness. Friends of Youth is there to provide those solutions and support every young person who is looking to move off the streets and into safe housing.

NATIONAL CHARITY LEAGUE Volunteer Spotlight

Over the past year, the National Charity League- Sammamish Chapter, a nonprofit composed of engaged mothers and their daughters, has contributed significantly to Friends of Youth. In just one year, they made journals for Safe Place, an outreach program designed to provide access to immediate help and safety for youth ages 11-17 in crisis; donated hundreds of dollars in donations for our Thanksgiving baskets; put in two wonderful reading corners into our New Ground Totem Lake Transitional Living Program and filled out 3,500 Microsoft Giving Tree tags. These are just a few of the amazing projects National Charity League has completed for Friends of Youth and, they continue to ask for more ways to get involved. We are very grateful for their support, generosity, and time which has significantly benefited the youth and young adults we serve.





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Join Us

APRIL

Volunteer Appreciation Event - April 14

April is Volunteer Appreciation Month and Friends of Youth is hosting our annual volunteer appreciation event on Tuesday, April 14th to celebrate and acknowledge our amazing volunteers. If you are interested in attending to support our volunteers, please RSVP to volunteer@friendsofyouth.org.

MAY

GIVEBIG "Day of Champions" - May 5

A day to give and help our homeless youth! For details visit our Facebook and Twitter sites or contact Sabrina Matson; 425-869-6490 ext. 320 sabrina@friendsofyouth.org

May is National Foster Care Month

A time to recognize the role each of us plays in the lives of children and youth in foster care. For more information on how to help ensure that their future is bright click on: <https://www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth/>

JUNE

It Gets Better Project, Take The Pledge

Take the pledge and get involved by helping spread the hope of lesbian, gay, Bisexual and transgender. This population represents 40% of our youth homeless today. Get Involved! <http://www.itgetsbetter.org/pages/action-center>

JULY

Stay Out of the Sun Drive

During July, we are encouraging donors to remember our homeless youth with a summer donation of sunscreen, lotion, ball caps, and other "heat beating" items. Donations can be dropped off at our Kirkland Youth Service Center at 13116 NE 132nd Street, Kirkland, WA 98304

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