We were so excited to have Liliana, one of our foster parents, share her story at our recent luncheon. Liliana has been fostering children for 11 years, the last three with Friends of Youth. Throughout the years Liliana says she has met wonderful kids, kind people, and had amazing life lessons.

"I have witnessed what resilience really means, I have witnessed what second chances really look like, and I have witnessed young kids become adults full of hope for what lies ahead for them."

At 24 years old Liliana worked the graveyard shift at an agency caring for drug and alcohol addicted newborns. She witnessed firsthand the need for foster parents.

"You see, when 'our' babies were ready to leave the center, they faced the reality of having no place to go. I wanted to take them all, but of course that was impossible and so I decided that even taking only one would make a difference, and that is how it all started."

Liliana, who is fully bilingual, shared her story in both Spanish and English. She wanted the audience to know the confusion that some of our foster children feel, many of whom are from Central America.

As a bilingual, bicultural foster parent, Liliana offers a home full of love, caring, and support as these children adjust to a new country and a new life.

Liliana says foster parenting is one of the most difficult things she’s ever done, but it’s also one of the most rewarding. She says without a doubt it is something she would do over and over again.
OUR AMAZING VOLUNTEERS

April is Volunteer Appreciation Month and we are fortunate to have so many amazing volunteers.

In 2017 we saw more than 725 people give their time and talent to make a difference at Friends of Youth. The hours they give help to make a home for our youth and help our organization run a little more smoothly. We are grateful for the time and commitment of our volunteers. They are the best!

Expedia employees during Expedia Day of Caring helped to landscape around our programs

Ernst & Young employees sort donations.

June is Pride Month

Did you know up to 40% of young people experiencing homelessness identify at LGBTQ?

Friends of Youth is committed to providing services and support for all youth, especially LGBTQ youth.

Over the years we have taken part in PRIDE month activities, including the Pride Parade. This year the PRIDE Parade will march through Seattle on June 24th. We will be there sharing our support for the LGBTQ community.

Visit our website for more PRIDE month activities.

Volunteer Opportunities

If you want to volunteer with Friends of Youth we know just where you can help us out. Here are some needs.

Sort Donations
At Friends of Youth we have a basement of donations, from clothing to hygiene products, snack packs to boxes of socks and much more. We need a regular volunteer to organize, take inventory and make sure donations are all tucked away in the right place.

Volunteer with a Truck
If you have a truck and are willing to help out on occasion we could use your help to move some of our bigger items.

On-Call Volunteer
There are times when we could use a volunteer’s help moving our clients in and out of their living situation.

Contact us if you’re interested: volunteer@friendsofyouth.org

Did you know up to 40% of young people experiencing homelessness identify at LGBTQ?
Friends of Youth has been supporting foster care services for the children of our community since 1951. The number of foster homes available in Washington has not kept pace with the number of children in need of care. There are more than 10,000 children in foster care in our state. These children range in age from newborn to young adult, but every child deserves the love of a family to care for them.

At Friends of Youth we work with each foster family and child providing a case manager, case aid and a mental health therapist. We also provide monthly trainings and support groups.

What you might not know is there are many types of care YOU can provide beyond traditional fulltime foster care. Respite Foster Care is an initial step you can take if you are thinking of becoming involved. Other opportunities include:

- Volunteer: become a tutor, help with events, take kids on field trips;
- Sponsor an Outing: donate tickets to a movie night, or a ball game;
- Join our Foster Friends Circle -- by making a fiscal commitment as a founding member of this group you can help increase the number of foster beds we provide.

Contact our Foster Care Team: fostercare@friendsofyouth.org

**CEO CORNER**

**I Know You!**

You have a caring heart for children. It's what led you to Friends of Youth, what puts this newsletter in your mailbox, and what drew your eye to the few words contained here, on the bottom of page three.

Caring hearts lead to action.
Caring hearts respond to the needs of those around them.
Caring hearts change the world.

Children in foster care have great need of your caring heart. Facing neglect, uncertainty, fear and disruption, they need the basics — a safe home, someone to love them, someone to walk with them on the difficult road they are traveling.

They are in great need of your caring heart. How will you respond?

**May is National Foster Care Month** — I hope you’ll observe it by listening to your caring heart and supporting a foster child.

**We Have a New Mission Statement**

Friends of Youth recently adopted a new mission statement to better reflect the many ways we are fulfilling our vision that all youth have every opportunity to succeed. The new statement reflects our intended impact:

*We partner with youth and families to provide the relationships, resources, and skills they need to attain personal growth and success.*
What’s Happening

**APRIL**

**Friends of Youth & the Mariners Day at the Park**

Friends of Youth is teaming up with the Seattle Mariners to bring you a special day at the ballpark. Mark your calendars for April 15th. A portion of your ticket purchase will benefit Friends of Youth. Get tickets here: www.mariners.com/friendsofyouth For details contact jackie@friendsofyouth.org

**MAY**

**GiveBig**

May 9th

Invest in youth and GiveBig in May. This one day, online, charitable event will help Friends of Youth support our clients. Tune in to our social media channels in the weeks before May 9th we will be telling you how you can participate and how you can learn more about the GiveBig campaign.

**JUNE**

**Summer Sun Drive for Youth**

Help our youth get through the summer months and the warmer temperatures. We encourage donations of sunscreen, lotion, hats, and other items to help our kids ‘beat the heat.’ Drop off items at our Kirkland Youth Service Center or check out our Amazon Wish List on the front page of our website, www.friendsofyouth.org

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