“Jennifer”, a single mother raising seven children, connected with Friends of Youth when she was about to lose her housing. She has five children of her own and after her sister died, she took in her sister’s two children. Jennifer works full-time for $11.55 an hour.

At the end of June, Jennifer received a 60-day notice from her landlord because her rental home was being sold. Just a week later, Jennifer was taken to the ER with severe pain. Doctors found a cancerous tumor on her kidney. Jennifer needed surgery and a minimum one-month recovery time, delaying her search for housing.

Although Jennifer has a Section 8 voucher, she struggled to find a new home that would accept the voucher. When their 60-day notice expired, they moved out of their house and started living in motels. Friends of Youth’s case manager, funded through the Best Starts for Kids Youth and Family Homelessness Initiative, helped Jennifer approach her employers, who assisted her in getting a reduced rate at a local hotel. We were able to assist the family by paying for the two week hotel stay while she continued to look for housing.

Jennifer found a housing option quickly and got the ‘all clear’ from Section 8. On move in day, her new neighbors welcomed her with cookies & well wishes. The family was surprised and appreciative. One of her children said, “I've never lived in a place where neighbors are so nice!”

We are grateful to the voters of King County, who believed in their neighbors like Jennifer, and approved the Best Starts for Kids levy, ensuring a safety net for families in need.
**GIVING TREE**

Thank you for Giving Generously

Friends of Youth partnered with dozens of local merchants and friends this year to bring holiday cheer to the youth and families we serve. Our holiday gifting program, Giving Tree, was once again a huge success.

We were fortunate to have 54 sites throughout King County where Christmas Trees were decked with Giving Tree tags. Among the participating sites: Microsoft, Redmond Town Center, University Village, Costco, Mod Pizza, and BSquare.

In December a local business donated space to temporarily sort and store the hundreds of donated gifts. Dozens of volunteers spent time acting as holiday helpers, collecting and sorting gifts. The outpouring of community support was overwhelming.

Because of volunteers and the generosity of our community we were able to support every child in our foster care homes, every young adult in our housing and homeless youth program, and every baby in our Healthy Start program.

We are grateful for your generosity which helped make this time of year special for our clients and gave them a holiday filled with love, warmth and joy.

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**DONOR SPOTLIGHT**

**Mr. Socks**

Michael Jay Taylor, a former Friends of Youth board member, continues to support our youth as “Mr. Socks.”

Michael got his name by donating thousands of pairs of socks to Friends of Youth. It’s amazing how a warm pair of socks can make a big difference for young people on the streets or those struggling to make ends meet.

This generous donor gives away socks as a tribute to his late mother. We thank you and value your kindness Mr. Socks!

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**Volunteer Spotlight**

Over the last year local dentist, **Dr. Aalam Samsavar**, and his family have been tireless supporters of Friends of Youth.

From running a tooth whitening campaign that collected almost $3,000 in donations, to collecting new winter clothing for our youth, Dr. Samsavar has found a way to support Friends of Youth through the seasons.

His children, Nika and Kian, are also involved. The high school students are familiar faces at our Kirkland Youth Service Center showing up once a week to help, a commitment that began four years ago when Kian thought this would be a good place to volunteer. Eventually Nika joined him. The time they have spent with us has been invaluable.

Thank you Samsavar family for your kindness and dedication.

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Dr. Samsavar presents President and CEO, Terry Pottmeyer with a check.

Nika and Kian helping out at our Kirkland office, every week for the last four years!
CELLEBRATION OF YOUTH
Join Us For Lunch

Each year, Friends of Youth provides support, shelter, homes, and help to more than 6,000 youth and young adults. At our annual luncheon, we celebrate our youth while raising funds to ensure that every young person has the support and opportunities they need to succeed.

Mark your calendars! Our 13th annual Celebration of Youth will be held on Friday, March 9, 2018 at the Hyatt Regency Bellevue. Registration begins at 11:30am with lunch following from 12-1pm.

Host a table and invite guests to join you. Become a Sponsor or a Challenge Donor or register as a guest. There are many ways for you to become involved with our luncheon.

For more information contact our Development Director, Jackie Schultz —425.869.6490 x308 or jackie@friendsofyouth.org

CEO CORNER
King County is Becoming a Better Place for Kids

Two years ago Executive Dow Constantine proposed a new initiative designed to promote healthy and resilient children, youth and families in King County. The Best Starts for Kids levy, overwhelmingly supported by King County voters, supports investments and interventions that put every child in our county on the path to lifelong success.

It’s the most hopeful, helpful and encouraging thing that’s happened for kids in our community in a very long time.

Friends of Youth has secured several grants through the BSK levy to support the children, youth and families we serve.

The first was for the Youth & Family Homelessness Prevention Initiative (YFHPI).

**It’s been a game changer.**

Much of our funding to end homelessness, and thus much of our programming, is a response to the needs of young families and youth who are already experiencing homelessness. YFHPI funding has given us the opportunity to work with families and youth to maintain their housing and stability, preventing an experience of homelessness.

In an era of pay for performance, prevention funding often goes by the wayside. After all, it can be hard to measure what didn’t happen because you were able to intervene at the right time with much needed support. But after a year of YFHPI we can tell you story after story (like Jennifer’s, featured on the front page) that demonstrate the critical importance of prevention funding.

With YFHPI, our families and youth tell us exactly what support they need to stay housed, so we can respond quickly and respectfully, reinforcing their self-efficacy and natural resilience and supporting them in achieving their goals.

We are grateful to the County Executive, the County Council, and the voters for believing in their neighbors, and for their support of the children and families of our community. We’ve never been more hopeful about the future for our kids.
What’s Happening

JANUARY

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

FEBRUARY

Valentine's Day
February 14

Do you want to do something a little more than a dinner reservation this Valentine’s Day? Join us for a special evening. Sip some bubbly while learning how to tee off and how you can help Friends of Youth. For details contact jackie@friendsofyouth.org

MARCH

Celebration of Youth
March 9

At our annual luncheon we celebrate our youth, while raising funds to ensure every youth has an opportunity to succeed. To become a Table Captain, Sponsor, Challenge Donor, or for more information please call 425.869.6490 x308 or e-mail jackie@friendsofyouth.org

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