

DONOR HIGHLIGHT: MARY FLECKENSTEIN-SIMPSON

“Friends of Youth is the Best Kept Secret in the Northwest”

A What would make a single, highly motivated career woman become involved in an organization helping young people she had never met? For Mary Fleckenstein-Simpson, it started when she was introduced to Friends of Youth at a house party of friend, Sharon Mafei. That day, Mary heard a teen mom speak and soon after took a tour of Friends of Youth’s Griffin Home facility in Renton. Going to Griffin Home and talking with some of the boys at the time, she remembers feeling how their stories “pulled at my heartstrings.” After that visit she knew she had to get more involved.

Involvement for Mary meant becoming a Board Member in 1996 and then Board President in 1997. In those early years, Mary worked with President and CEO, Howard Finck and was an integral part of initiating the Capital Campaign that built the new campus on the Griffin Home property. Her passion to make sure these youth continued to receive Friends of Youth’s unique services led her to become part of the team that accepted the challenge and successfully raised over \$5 million dollars.

After serving her term as Board President, Mary married husband, David and together had two beautiful children. She has continued to be involved in the mission of Friends of Youth and currently serves on the Foundation Board. Mary has watched Friends of Youth grow and change through the years and through it all remains committed to supporting the comprehensive, high quality services available for Eastside youth. One overriding thought for her was that “the youth had a lot of hope.” Thanks to Mary, the hope of our young people can be realized with opportunities to succeed through Friends of Youth.