May is National Foster Care Month

Each year, 500 foster youth in our state turn 18 and “graduate” from foster care. More than a third of them will face housing instability or homelessness before their 19th birthday. But there is good news - the state recently expanded foster care to allow youth to stay in care until age 21 while they work on education and employment goals.

Friends of Youth is creating new housing to respond to the needs of youth in extended foster care. Our new homes will house ten youth as they pursue employment and education opportunities and become self-sufficient adults. Learn more about National Foster Care Month at www.fostercaresmonth.org.

Architect’s Rendering of Friends of Youth’s New Extended Foster Care Homes
On April 17th, we celebrated another step forward in our journey to address youth homelessness with the opening of two new homes for homeless youth ages 16 to 21 and two new homes for youth in extended foster care ages 18 to 21.

At the celebration, CEO Terry Pottmeyer thanked the standing room only crowd for their support of the agency’s vision to create a world where all youth have every opportunity to succeed.

“The four new homes we celebrate today will become a landing pad where homeless and foster youth will find a place of refuge and growth, and a launching pad where those same young people will leave us for stable, independent, and successful futures”.

First Lady Trudi Inslee, King County Executive Dow Constantine, Kirkland Mayor Amy Walen, State Representative Roger Goodman and a host of other officials were on hand for the celebration, which took place at Friends of Youth’s Kirkland campus.

Representative Goodman noted that the rainy day was a fitting backdrop for the event, as the homes would provide a safe, warm and dry alternative for youth living on the streets.

First Lady Inslee remarked that these homes, and programs, should be available in every community across our state and issued a call to action to the attendees to make this a reality, eradicating homelessness for young people in Washington. We couldn’t agree more!

CARRIE WILLIAMS, Volunteer Spotlight

Carrie started volunteering with Friends of Youth at the Kirkland Youth Service Center last November, helping with our Giving Tree Program. She arrived every day for a week and a half and happily pitched in with the many administrative tasks needed to ensure that our 4,800 youth had a holiday gift this year. She continues to volunteer in Kirkland as well as at our Drop-In Center for at-risk youth located at the Redmond Youth Service Center. Thank you, Carrie, for your wonderful support.
COUNSELORS IN SCHOOLS,
Increased Counseling Services Available

Increase in Funds
Thanks to community donations at our Youth and Family Service Breakfast fundraisers in November, we were able to increase our mental health and substance abuse treatment counseling services in both the Snoqualmie Valley and Riverview School Districts.

In the Snoqualmie Valley School District, we added counseling hours at Mt. Si High School, with added mental health counseling hours and additional substance abuse treatment at Two Rivers School.

In the Riverview School District, additional substance abuse treatment counseling services and increased mental health counseling hours were added to the current counseling services provided at Cedar Crest High School.

These increased hours give more youth an opportunity to access services. In collaboration with school staff, our counselors assist students with a wide range of issues and concerns, including anxiety and stress related issues, alcohol and drug use/abuse, depression and mood disorders, anger/conflict management and other related concerns.

Offering additional services on-site at the schools has proven to be a very effective way to provide counseling and support to both students and the schools themselves.

To learn more about the Youth and Family Services program provided through Friends of Youth, please visit www.friendsofyouth.org/youthandfamily.aspx.

Meal Donors Needed
Every day of the week, with the help of our meal donors, we provide wholesome, pre-cooked meals for 15 (in the summer) young adults at our Redmond Youth Service Center. Dinner is served in the evening and breakfast is served in the morning. Lunch is available on weekdays for guests during drop-in hours.

Donors are encouraged to stay and serve the meals that they prepare. Want to help but can’t make the 8:45 PM drop off time? Sign up and have pizza delivered on your night. Contact our Volunteer Coordinator to apply: (425) 869-6490 x309 or volunteer@friendsofyouth.org.

7 Days a Week:
Friends of Youth
Redmond Youth Service Center
16225 NE 87th Street, Suite A-1
Redmond, WA 98052

Volunteer Appreciation Event: May 13
Friends of Youth is hosting our annual volunteer appreciation event on May 13th to celebrate and acknowledge our amazing volunteers. If you are interested in attending to support our volunteers, please RSVP to volunteer@friendsofyouth.org.

If you are interested in volunteering at Friends of Youth, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator at 425-869-6490 x309 or volunteer@friendsofyouth.org.

CEO COLUMN
Saying Yes to Youth

Friends of Youth was founded 63 years ago to fulfill a vision—that all youth should have every opportunity to succeed. Three years ago, as we were formulating our strategic plan, we asked ourselves, can we do a better job of fulfilling that vision, particularly in our homeless youth services work? The answer was a resounding yes.

Saying yes to youth has led us on a three year journey to raise community awareness of our work, raise funds to support new programs, and raise the roof—seven of them, to be exact, to achieve our vision.

On April 17th, 2014, we cut the ribbon on two new homes for homeless youth, and broke ground on two more for foster youth in extended foster care. By September we expect our extended foster care homes will be completed and ready for new residents.

Although September will mark the end of our roof raising, it won’t mark the end of our efforts to achieve our vision. In fact, we won’t be finished until we know that every young person in our community has a safe place to sleep each night, healthy food, supportive relationships and the access to the education and employment opportunities they need to be self-sufficient. Until they have every opportunity to succeed.

Someday, we will achieve our vision, but we won’t do it alone. We need all of you on the team, too. We need your help. Are you willing? Volunteer, donate, advocate and participate with us as we create a better world for youth, together. Thank you for caring about the young people of our community, and for your support of Friends of Youth.
**MAY**

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**JUNE**

**Take the Pledge**

ItGetsBetter.org

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth represent 10% of the general youth population but more than 20% of the homeless youth population. Take the ‘It Gets Better Pledge’ in June - www.itgetsbetter.org.

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**JULY**

**Stay Out of the Sun Drive**

Not everyone can avoid the sun during the summer months. For the month of July, consider donating sunscreen and aloe for our homeless youth who cannot always escape the rays. Items can be dropped off at our Kirkland Youth Service Center at 13116 NE 132nd Street, Kirkland, WA 98034.

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**AUGUST**

**School Supply Drive**

Aug. 1-15

We are collecting back-to-school supplies for the children we support in our Youth and Family Services program. Items can be dropped off Monday through Friday, 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM at our locations in Kirkland, Issaquah, Duvall, and Snoqualmie.