Fostering a Young Man’s Dreams

Our foster youth ‘Juan’ is 17 years old, originally from Honduras.

Juan left his home country to build a better life for himself, one without violence and poverty. Juan’s journey was long and scary, but the belief that leaving his home would eventually mean better opportunities sustained him. He rode many trains and walked for countless miles, finally crossing the river in Texas, where he was detained at the border and placed in a shelter for immigrant youth.

Juan was transferred to Friends of Youth in 2014, finding a home at McEachern House. After settling in and working on his skills, he was able to transition to our less restrictive group foster program, El Puente, and then to one of our bilingual foster homes in Renton, Howard’s House.

During this time Juan was able to gain the skills and confidence he needed to live in the community and attend public school. Juan is enrolled in high school in Renton, participating in sports both in the community and at school, fostering relationships with staff, working with his legal team to move his immigration case forward, and advocating for his personal needs.

Friends of Youth has been with Juan every step of the way and has celebrated with him as he has achieved his goals. We are there to help—by providing transportation to legal appointments, advocating for his mental health and educational needs, and providing wrap-around services to help with his interpersonal skills and overall well-being. While Juan has acknowledged that he still has much to learn on his way to self-sufficiency, he has demonstrated the ability to grow and develop skills on his journey to adulthood. He is excited for his future and wants to attend college and become an engineer.

Friends of Youth partners with foster youth and foster parents to ensure that every young person in our care has every opportunity to succeed. We are so proud of Juan and his many accomplishments!
WORDS FROM OUR CEO
It’s Time Again for Sensible Attention to Foster Care

In 1950, a Washington resident named Iva Matsen saw the challenge faced by her community: not enough foster homes for at-risk youth, particularly those exiting the juvenile justice system. She joined with other members of the University Congregational Church to take the critical step from concern to action—and within the year Friends of Youth was founded. By 1954 the group had leased our first foster home, in the Greenlake area of Seattle. Shortly thereafter we purchased Griffin Home, expanding our ability to care for foster youth even more.

Today, 65 years later, we are still serving foster youth at our Griffin Home campus and in community homes across King and Snohomish Counties. But in the intervening years, the challenge of finding enough foster homes for our children hasn’t fundamentally changed—the need is just as urgent today as it was in 1950.

Consider these sobering numbers: since 2007 Washington State has experienced a 17% decline in the number of foster homes—losing about a thousand foster homes in less than a decade. In November of 2015, there were 4,946 foster homes in our state, far less than the 6,000 licensed homes DSHS estimates that it needs to properly place and support our most vulnerable children.

Friends of Youth continues to recruit, license and support foster parents and foster homes. We need your help. Here’s what you can do to help children who need you:

- Become a foster parent—Open your home to foster children who need you, either full time or as a respite provider for other foster parents. Contact our recruiter to learn more: susan@friendsofyouth.org
- Advocate for an adequate state foster care budget so that the state can improve caseloads for its social workers, provide more foster parent training and increase foster parent support.
- Support Friends of Youth with a donation, by holding a supply drive, or becoming a tutor to a foster child—contact us to learn more.

An editorial published April 3, 1956, in the Seattle Post-Intelligencer urged the community to support Friends of Youth’s first public fund drive for its foster care homes. The editorial ended with these words:

“Whether your contribution is large or small, it will help—and help in a cause to which there cannot be too much sensible attention”.

It’s time, again, for sensible attention to be paid to the needs of foster children in Washington State.

JOIN US FOR OUR 65TH BIRTHDAY PARTY

We hope that Friends of Youth holds a special place in your heart—whether you’ve been a client, a staff member, a donor, a board member, a volunteer, an enthusiastic supporter or a funder. We hope that you can be with us to celebrate a significant milestone—our sixty-fifth year of service to children, youth, families and young adults in our community. We’ll be celebrating on October 5, 2016, from 4:00 to 6:00 at the beautiful Botanical Gardens in Bellevue.

Our program will celebrate the journey that Friends of Youth has taken in pursuit of its mission over the past 65 years; we will honor the legacy of those who have gone before us, and inspire us to continue that legacy into a future: a future where we realize our vision that every youth has every opportunity to succeed.

SAVE THE DATE
Friends of Youth 65th Birthday
October 5, 2016

MAY IS FOSTER CARE AWARENESS MONTH

Friends of Youth has been supporting foster care services for the children of our community since 1951. Our program is focused on providing therapeutic foster homes for children struggling with abuse and neglect, past trauma and multiple placements. We license some very special foster parents to foster these children, and we support them every step of the way.

Each one of our foster homes is safe and nurturing. We work as a team toward our goal that each child will find a ‘forever home’, or reunify with family. Our children include pregnant teens, refugee children, LGBQT teens and respite care. Each of our foster homes receive comprehensive support and a subsidy each month.

Have you ever wondered if you could be a foster parent? There are so many children who need you. We can help you understand what it takes to be a foster parent, or a respite foster parent.

Contact Susan Minyard, at 425-228-6776 ext. 129 or Susan@friendsofyouth.org

SOLAR PANELS INSTALLED AT FRIENDS OF YOUTH

On April 8th Kirkland Mayor Amy Walen joined us to celebrate the completion of our brand new 6.72 kW solar system. Half of the system was donated by Northwest Electric & Solar, the contractor for the Solarize Kirkland campaign, as a way to thank the community for supporting a successful campaign to increase the use of solar energy in Kirkland.

“It’s been great to work with the community of Kirkland to bring the Solarize Kirkland campaign to my hometown,” said Derek White, President and CEO of Northwest Electric & Solar. “This is just a small token of our gratitude for the support the community has given us and we are happy to make a difference for such a worthy nonprofit organization.”

Friends of Youth invested an additional amount to double the size of the solar array. Our new solar panels create a renewable energy source for our administration building, shrinking our carbon footprint and allowing us invest the savings on our electric bill in the children, youth, and families we serve.

VOLUNTEERS CONTINUE TO AMAZE IN 2016

Over 900 volunteers support our work each year. Here are some of the amazing groups that have volunteered with us so far in 2016. If you’d like to volunteer, let us know. volunteer@friendsofyouth.org

Farmers Insurance organized donations
United Way of King County’s Emerging Leaders
“Off the Vine” catering brought meals to our shelter
Students help out at Celebration of Youth on March 4th.
Join Us

MAY

GiveBIG
A special thanks to the Seattle Foundation for organizing GiveBIG, a day of philanthropy for nonprofits in our region. We embrace and support the foundation’s ‘Healthy Community’ vision. Thank you to everyone who gave BIG May 3rd.

JUNE

Summer Sun Drive for Youth
During June, we encourage donors to remember our homeless youth with a 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 or Consider giving through the Amazon Smiles program.

JULY

Back to School Drive
We are collecting back-to-school supplies for the children in our Youth and Family Services programs, and at our schools on our Griffin Home Campus. For a list of items, please check our website. Items can be dropped off Monday through Friday, 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM at our offices in Kirkland, Issaquah, Duvall, or Snoqualmie.

Your support will have a lasting, positive impact in the lives of youth in our area. To make a donation please contact the Development Office at 425-869-6490
For more information on Friends of Youth and our programs, please visit our website at www.friendsofyouth.org

Support
Carol Van Noy
carolv@friendsofyouth.org
425-869-6490 x319

Events
Ellie Ashby
Ellie@friendsofyouth.org
425-869-6490 x300

Volunteering
Alex Gornik
alexg@friendsofyouth.org
425-869-6490 x309

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linkedin.com/company/friends-of-youth/