



Connections

A Newsletter for Friends of Homeless Youth Connection

Racing for Hope Finishes Strong

The second annual Racing for Hope gala fundraiser, hosted May 7, was a success—thanks to you, our wonderful guests, sponsors and members of the community. After a full week of nail-biting rain forecasts, we were granted an amazingly beautiful 75-degree day. Perfect conditions for our Derby party on the front lawn of the Wigwam Resort in Litchfield Park.

More than 350 elegantly dressed guests attended the event and enjoyed the beautiful weather, the delicious food and drink, exciting horse racing, mystery boxes and raffle. A few lucky guests went home with amazing mystery box prizes (and a bottle of wine and dessert!) Raffle winners will be planning trips to Mexico, Disneyland, Las Vegas, Sedona and an ocean cruise.



Our Racing guests did not disappoint when it came to dressing for the Derby—lovely hats and florals on the ladies, and the gentleman all looked very Derby dapper! We love seeing all the amazing outfits every year, and our best-dressed contest proved to be a tough decision in picking a winner.



One of the activities that quickly became a fan favorite was posing with the majestic thoroughbreds and distant relative of Secretariat. Many guests first stop was to capture a quick photo with the horses to share on Facebook.

Overall, nearly \$70,000 was raised to support HYC and our homeless youth. With the expansion of our program to the East Valley, Phoenix and Deer Valley, the funding is an important resource that will sustain our programs for the students we serve.

Thank you to our Kentucky Derby and Preakness Sponsors:

- Phoenix Rotary 100
- Summit Community Church
- West Valley Mavericks
- Arizona Republic Charities
- Byrd Hotel Group
- Doug and Roberta Ginter
- Dave Hunter/Stephen Sussman
- Macy's

We thank those of you who participated in our post-event survey—we heard your comments and feedback and will use them all to make Racing for Hope even better in 2017... See you there!

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Giving homeless youth a chance for a brighter future.

Student Highlights

Each youth participating in the HYC program has a story. Below are a few stories of graduating seniors and the highlights of why they needed HYC and how they turned their story into success.

“Kristi” witnessed extreme violence and domestic abuse in the home. Kristi graduated with a 4.1 weighted GPA in the top 5% of her class. She was awarded the Dean Scholarship and plans to attend ASU for pre-med.

“Trent” was living in his car, had dropped out of school and experienced physical and emotional abuse in the home. Though very behind in school, he made up the work and graduated on time. He was one vote shy of being the class valedictorian.

“Jenny” overcame years of abuse in the DCS system since the age of nine. She graduated with a 3.675 GPA and will attend ASU West.

“Matt” was living in the desert and in the park while still making it to school. Through our Host Family program he has found a more stable environment with a loving family. He graduated this year and looks forward to beginning at EMCC this Fall.

“Faith” has seen abusive situations and has endured unstable home environments. She is the first person in her family to receive her high school diploma. After graduation she will be finishing her second year at West-MEC cosmetology program over the next year!

“Kerri” woke up in the summer between her freshman and sophomore year of high school to find her father had died in his sleep from a stroke. She had a limited relationship with her mother, but chose to move with her mother who has always lived with friends. Over the past three years “Kerri” has stayed with her mother at friend’s homes and has surpassed the odds by graduating this year and being accepted into GCC.

(Names have been changed to protect the privacy of the students.)

HOMELESS YOUTH CONNECTION

Celebrates Graduation of 76 High School Seniors



Graduation season has come and gone, and HYC celebrated the successful high school careers of 76 seniors from schools across the West Valley. The mission of HYC is to provide homeless youth with basic needs including hygiene, clothing, case management and housing—so they can focus on school and graduate.



The seniors came from 16 different schools—part of the 34 total that HYC currently serves. Among them were several scholarship recipients, an army recruit and a number of students who plan to attend local community colleges, Northern Arizona University and Arizona State University.

Many of the HYC students have overcome insurmountable odds, including extreme poverty and abusive homes, but with the support of HYC case managers, host families, mentors and staff, they have persevered and achieved their goal of a high school education.

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“When Gabriel came to live with me because he left home under some bad circumstances, I didn’t know what I was going to do to get him through his situation, but thanks to you and HYC, you helped us through it. Your organization is truly a blessing for all students having hardships. God bless you and HYC.

Please continue this program for future students.”

—GRANDMOTHER OF GABRIEL, A RECENT GRADUATE

Graduation *(Continued)*

Currently there are no other services for homeless youth in the West Valley. Unaccompanied youth, often referred to as 'youth on their own,' do what they need to survive including couch surfing, doubling up with other family or living in parks or cars. Without support, these youth will live in a chronic state of crisis. HYC is a preventative measure that works to minimize these stressors, giving the youth the ability to focus on school and be successful.



"Statistically, 75 percent of homeless youth drop out of high school. Thanks in part to the HYC team, 70 percent of the seniors in our program have completed their education and have a chance at a brighter future. HYC is having a dramatic impact on the dropout rate in Arizona. We are incredibly proud of the men and women who stayed committed to their education. They understand the importance of a high school diploma and the opportunities that are available to them because they completed this important step in their journey," said Executive Director Dawn Bogart.

"The organization has helped give both my mother and myself hope that there is light at the end of the tunnel. This organization is truly amazing in all that it does for people who need the help."

—KAITLIN, CLASS OF 2016

Getting Ready for Back to School!

For Unaccompanied and Homeless Youth

Before we know it, the summer season will come to an end and we'll be preparing for another school year. Our students are often in need of a variety of supplies for schools such as backpacks, notebooks and calculators, as well as basic hygiene including deodorant, soap and shampoo. We are in great need of replenishing not only hygiene supplies but also our gift card supplies. Students use gift cards for food, clothes and other basic needs and we have very few remaining at this time of year. If you have the means to donate any of these supplies or gift cards, they can be brought to our office at 500 N. Bullard Suite 28. This is also a great project for your church, school or social group to host a drive to support our efforts.

Needed Gift Cards:



Fast Food Cards
\$5-\$10 or more



Clothing/Misc Gift Cards for \$10-\$20
(Target, Walmart, Kohl's, etc.)



Grocery Cards
\$10-\$20 or more
(Fry's, Safeway, Food City)



Gas Cards \$10

Mark Your Calendar for Our Annual Empowering Youth Breakfast!

Thursday, Oct. 27, 2016 – Tuscany Falls Golf Resort

Our annual Empowering Youth Breakfast will be hosted this fall on Thursday, October 27, 2016, at Tuscany Falls



Golf Resort at PebbleCreek in Goodyear. This is an important event for raising awareness in the community about HYC and our program. Watch for details on how to RSVP coming soon.

A Special Thank You to Our Municipal Partners!

Our local cities are an important resource to provide not only support of our program and mission, but also human services contacts, community services and much more. We thank them for their continued support of our goal to assist homeless youth in our own neighborhoods!

- City of Avondale
- City of Buckeye
- City of Glendale
- City of Goodyear
- City of Litchfield Park
- City of Peoria
- City of Surprise



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