



Connections

A Newsletter for Friends of Homeless Youth Connection

Homeless Youth Connection Continues to Grow!

Homeless Youth Connection is excited to report that we have once again expanded our program to support homeless youth attending schools in the Mesa school district, as well as more schools in the Phoenix Union district and several new charter schools. Currently, HYC is working with more than 60 high schools throughout Maricopa County. Our goal this year is to help 600 homeless youth stay in school and complete their education. To accomplish this effort, HYC hired three case managers, bringing the total to six case managers. Each case manager averages a case load of approximately 100 students throughout the year.

Recent reports from the Arizona Department of Education indicate that there are more than 7,000 homeless youth attending high school in Maricopa County, and 570 of those students are unaccompanied youth, or youth on their own. We can see by these statistics that there is definitely a need for services. On average, 75 percent of homeless youth drop out of school. Thanks to the work of our case managers, the majority of our students are staying engaged in school and focused on their education. But there are still a lot of students who need our help. We look forward to working with the community to continue to meet this need.

In addition to our expansion, HYC is taking a more active role in working with our community to address the needs of homeless youth. HYC's leadership team is chairing the Youth Work Group for the Maricopa Association of Governments Continuum of Care committee. This group's goal is to help address the barriers homeless youth have in accessing services, as well as advocate to move youth to a higher priority in the Regional Plan to End Homelessness. As a result of the work with these different groups, HYC was included in the Shelter Count Survey that is part of HUD's Point In Time count. These are great steps on the way to making sure that every child matters, and every youth receives the resources they need to have a self-sufficient and brighter future.

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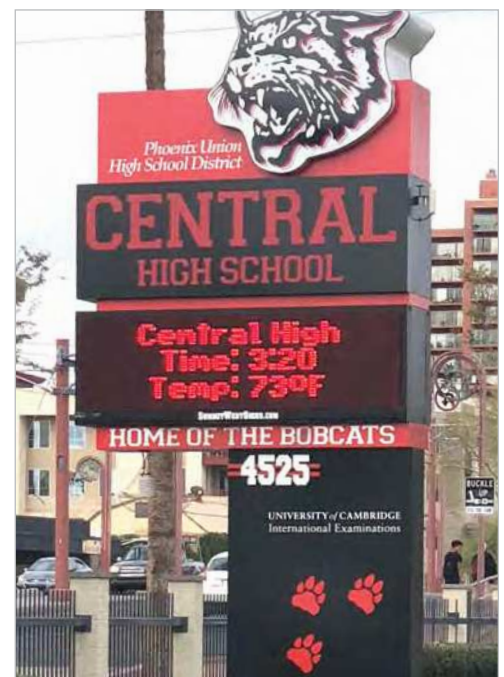
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Giving homeless youth a chance for a brighter future.

Donations Update

With the expansion of Homeless Youth Connection and the increase in the number of students we serve, HYC has also seen a tremendous amount of support from the community through in-kind donations of clothing, school supplies, hygiene items, and more. For the entire fall and winter season of 2017, we had an average of two to three donation drop-offs per week, and there were a lot of times these numbers tripled. We are so happy to have a larger office space, but with the number of donations we were receiving and the addition of our new high school partners, the seams of our office were about to burst. To ensure that all our students have access to the donations, HYC is happy to announce that we have worked to establish resource spaces in most of the districts we serve, as well as several of the charter schools. This ensures the product and clothing donations that come in will go directly to the schools and students we serve.



Donations are a vital part of HYC and make up a big portion of the resources we are able to provide our students. We have been so fortunate, thanks to our Founder, Larry Cervarich, for the established and ongoing relationships we have with Dick's Sporting Goods and Walmart Distribution Company. We continue to receive products from both companies that truly enhance the lives of the students we serve. Whether it's a pallet of name-brand hygiene product from Walmart or a truck full of brand new clothing apparel from Dick's Sporting Goods, our students are able to rely on corporations that care about their circumstances and want to give them a chance at a better life.

We also continue to receive a tremendous amount of support from our community members. Individuals come to HYC with brand new or gently used items with hopes that our students can use the donated goods. With the help of volunteers, we are able to sort and process the donations that come in every day. While a lot of the items we receive go directly to our students, some of the items are not appropriate for our students such as damaged clothing, items for the wrong age range, or an abundance of certain items. In these cases, we share these items with other nonprofits in the area that can make use of the items.

After we have exhausted these opportunities, we sometimes still have donations that cannot be used. As a result, HYC recently established a new partnership with Savers. This partnership allows us to turn the extra donations into funding, which allows youth to purchase the items they need which might not be available through our Teen Exchange. We've used this source of funding to purchase plus-sized clothing, underwear and bras, and much more. In short, no donation ever goes to waste. HYC truly appreciates every donation, large or small.

Holiday Thank You's

HYC celebrated another record-breaking year of support for students during the holidays. Thanks to our community partners, HYC was able to meet the needs and provide gifts for more than 250 homeless youth. Words cannot express the gratitude we have for our community and corporate sponsors.



We are especially grateful to the individuals that stepped up to meet the last-minute need. HYC experienced an unprecedented number of student intakes toward

the end of December. When word was sent out about the need for holiday help, individuals and companies came to the rescue to ensure every HYC student received holiday gifts. The response we received truly reflected "the season of giving."

Our building was covered from floor to ceiling and throughout every office with rows and piles of beautifully wrapped presents thanks to this amazing response. With the help of our terrific group of volunteers and staff, basic needs like warm clothing as well as presents to delight each student were distributed to more than 60 high schools throughout the Valley. The smiles and tears from all our students reminded each volunteer and staff about the difference we make in the lives of our youth.



In addition to the gifts, HYC received much needed gift cards for food and clothing, and several donation drives of blankets, clothing, and gift cards. Gift cards, in particular, are critical to

meet the needs of the students after the holiday and through graduation. Some of the groups who came through with substantial donations or donation drives during the holiday season are listed below. On behalf of our all our students, we want to thank all our individual, community, and corporate holiday sponsors. You truly made this a joyful time for all our students.



A BIG Thank You to Our Holiday Sponsors!

- Abrazo West Pharmacy Group
- APS
- Arrowhead Insurance Group
- Chapter DM P.E.O.
- Compass-i
- Desert Edge High School Key Club & AVID Club
- Hearts & Hugs
- Joy of Giving
- Kiwanis of Sun City
- National Council for Prescription Drug Programs
- OCM Recycle West
- Odyssey Schools
- Pebble Creek residents
- St. Peter's Episcopal Church Thrift Shop
- Summit Church congregation members
- VIP Mortgage
- Westar Elementary
- Willow Canyon High School Key Club
- More than 80 individuals who provided holiday gifts!

Volunteers Needed



Homeless Youth Connection (HYC) relies on its volunteers to help us manage the many tasks involved with giving our students a brighter future. Volunteer opportunities are varied and plentiful, depending on the individual's interests and level of commitment they can provide. There is the occasional need for administrative and event help, and of course, there

is always a need for Host Families and mentors. For those who want the "hands-on" work with the students we serve, but perhaps not the long-term commitment involved in mentoring or the host family program, HYC has a couple of other volunteer opportunities.

For instance, most of our students lack transportation. HYC's case managers do their best to get the students where they need to go, but our staff is small. We depend on volunteers to help pick up and drop off students at counseling appointments, doctor appointments, and the like. Their appointments are typically in the late afternoon (after school hours) or on Saturdays. In addition, we have a group of students who meet here at our office each Wednesday for a peer support meeting. This weekly meeting provides them with an opportunity to get to know one another, support each other, and learn that they are not alone with what they are going through. Many of the students come to our office straight from school, and our case managers can usually help for those who don't have transportation. However, some students may also need a ride home after Group ends.

Another way to interact with our students, is to provide meals for one or more of these weekly Group meetings. Since these students are at HYC's office through dinner time, we try to provide them with a meal before they go home. This is a great opportunity for individuals and group volunteers (companies, churches, etc.). Dinner can be something as simple as pizza or sub sandwiches, or it can be a home-cooked meal. Home cooking option provides the opportunity to teach the students some life skills by explaining how the food was prepared, and how budgeting and shopping for the recipe was done. Typically, volunteers prepare or purchase meals for about a dozen students.

If you would like to help with one of these options, please contact our Office Manager, Korina Mitchell, at kmitchell@hyc.org or (623) 374-3747.



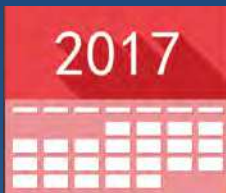
Homeless Youth
Connection

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hycaz.org

HYC Connections

Winter/Spring 2018



Calendar of Events

Save these dates and mark your calendar with this important list of upcoming HYC events!

MARCH 8-11 & 15-18
Spring Carnival
Goodyear Ballpark
Fireworks on the 9th and 16th



APRIL 3
Arizona Gives Day
Make your donation online!



APRIL 7
Tee Off for Teens Golf Tournament
Tuscany Falls, Goodyear
Registration begins at 7am

APRIL 7
Taste of Surprise
Surprise Stadium, 4pm – 9pm

APRIL 8
Arizona Pride Parade
3rd Street & Thomas in Phoenix
Starts at 10am



APRIL 17
Arizona Charitable Tax Credit Donation Deadline!

MAY 5
Racing for Hope
Litchfield's at the Wigwam
Starts at 1pm

