



Connections

A Newsletter for Friends of Homeless Youth Connection

To Graduation and Beyond

As we closed another amazing school year, Homeless Youth Connection celebrated the graduation of 180 students from high school. These students worked hard, stayed focused, and persevered through the toughest challenges we could imagine. We are so proud of their strength, resilience, and commitment to their education. Of the graduates, 131 students will enter into the world of college and higher education. We say goodbye and be safe to the seven graduates who will be joining our Armed Forces. Many of the remaining graduates are diving into the workforce, having secured employment and a future. It is with the help and support of our community, our HYC team, and the students themselves that we are able to reduce the rate of homelessness in our great state, and secure a brighter future for our youth! Below are the stories of some of the students we've served this year.



STEVEN was a senior in high school this past year. He never thought he would make it that far. At 16 years old, Steven's mom sent him across the country without any support because she couldn't take care of him anymore. He bounced from friend to friend while trying to keep up with school. With support from HYC,

Steven was able to improve his grades and even play for a school sports team. When Steven found out his father died, he turned to HYC for the stability and comfort he was seeking. In May, HYC staff proudly watched Steven walk across the stage at his high school graduation with all of his peers. Steven is now working and enrolled in Junior College. He is excited for the future ahead of him.



AMANDA and her mother struggled to see eye to eye during her entire childhood. When Amanda's mother brought a new boyfriend into their home, Amanda became a victim of abuse and neglect, and began falling behind in her schoolwork. To escape from the

trauma, Amanda turned to HYC to help her stay in school while she struggled to find herself. Amanda moved in with a Host Family, and felt safe and loved for the first time. In May, Amanda was able to regain enough credits to graduate and enroll in college. Now, Amanda is hoping to become a pediatrician, to care for children the way she never was.

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COMING SOON! New Emergency Host Home

Often, when a student is identified to HYC, they are in a state of crisis with nowhere to go that night. HYC addresses housing for unaccompanied youth through our Host Family program. However, it usually takes HYC a little time to formally assess the student, determine the need for a host family, and identify and prepare a family for that student. In these crisis situations, HYC has worked with other organizations to try to find the student temporary shelter, but sometimes there are simply no beds to be had. This leads to additional stress and worry for the student and for HYC staff.

Thankfully, HYC has developed a plan to address these situations. Through a wonderful partnership with Catholic Charities, we are in the process of identifying and purchasing a home in the city of Goodyear that will fill those gaps. The home will serve as temporary placement for up to eight students at a time, and students will be allowed to stay for up to 30 days while HYC works through the process of identifying a permanent host family for them. We anticipate the home will be available for use by October, 2018.

HYC has reviewed several similar programs to address the operation and supervision of the home, and has developed a hybrid model that will address HYC's unique population. Primarily, the home will be monitored by HYC staff, **but we need the community's help too!** HYC staff members are in the process of identifying churches and other groups who would be willing to partner with HYC to meet this emergency need. HYC is looking for partners that will adopt the home one day each week. Each partner would be responsible for providing food and miscellaneous household needs (such as laundry detergent or dish soap) for that day/week. This includes breakfast and dinner foods, as well as snacks for the students staying there. In addition, volunteers will provide supervision in the afternoon from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Already, we have identified three church congregations who are willing to do this, including First Southern Baptist Church Avondale, Palm Valley Church, and Refinery Church. But we still need four more partners to complete the schedule. **If your church or group is willing to take on this project, please contact us at info@hyc.org or call our office at 623-374-3747 for more information.**



Back to School Drive

Are you a part of a sports team, business, community group, or just a group of friends? With a new school year coming up, our students could use some help with school supplies. Consider bringing your group together to have a back-to-school drive to benefit homeless teens! For more information on how to host a drive, please contact us at (623) 374-3747 or info@hyc.org. We are in need of the following supplies:

- Backpacks
- Single/Multiple Subject Notebooks
- Pens (Red or black)
- College/Wide Ruled Paper
- Day Planners (weekly/monthly)
- 3-ring Binders
- Binder Dividers
- Calculators (scientific/graphing)
- Mechanical Pencils
- Colored Pencils
- Fine-Tip Markers
- Graph Paper
- Post-Its (all sizes)
- Highlighters

New High School Sponsorship Program

With the summer coming to an end, HYC is excited to announce the introduction of a new program, perfect for kicking off the new school year. The High School Sponsorship brings together community members like you with your local schools, bridging a path to address homelessness in your neighborhood. It costs HYC at least \$5,000 per year to provide services to the students in each school we serve. Through this program, communities can work together to sponsor a school in their own backyard. Churches, businesses, service organizations, families and individuals can collectively sponsor a HYC high school of their choosing to help shine light on the invisible population enrolled there.

With your help, we can secure a sustainable donation base for the students in your community. The High School Sponsorship also keeps you connected to the students you are helping—the ones in your neighborhood who are experiencing homelessness. We'll send you quarterly updates on the students your donations will directly impact. **If you are interested in contributing to your local school's sponsorship, or learning more about the new HYC High School Sponsorship, call our office today or schedule a presentation from our Community Engagement Department at info@hyc.org. Donations can be made through our website at hyc.org.**

Gift Cards Needed

Did you know that many of HYC's students don't know if they will eat dinner each night? Or where their food will come from on the weekends? You can help our students focus on school rather than their next meal by donating food gift cards! A donation as small as \$5 can not only provide dinner to a youth, but also peace of mind. Even a \$30 card to the grocery store allows a student to eat for an entire weekend! **Consider donating \$5 gift cards to places like McDonald's, Subway, Chick-Fil-A, or other fast food restaurants and \$30 gift cards to grocery stores.** You could even host a drive and get your whole community involved! For questions or more information, please email info@hyc.org.



Are you ever craving a taco on a Tuesday evening? Or are you curious about the programs that HYC provides?

Well, good news! HYC is serving up a monthly gathering, called Taco 'Bout it Tuesdays. This free event is available to those who are interested in learning more about HYC's programs, like our Host Family

Program. Each night covers a specific topic and is accompanied by delicious tacos, casual conversation, and the chance to hear from the staff of HYC and those who have been impacted by our services. Questions and comments are always welcome during the evening's festivities — in fact, highly encouraged! The chatter and crunching of shells happens at HYC's office in Avondale.

Keep a lookout for our next Taco 'Bout it Tuesday. You can always find more information or RSVP for one of the events through our website (www.hyc.org/events) or Facebook page (www.facebook.com/HomelessYouthConnectionAZ). Interested in hosting a Taco 'Bout It Tuesday in your community? Please let us know. We are trying to introduce our signature night in each of our partnering school districts. The city of Peoria has opened their home to HYC, and we will be hosting a Taco 'Bout it Tuesday with them on August 21.

Please Join Us!

Homeless Youth Connection (HYC) continues to grow at a phenomenal rate. In our first year, we served 47 students in a single school. This past school year, thanks to community partners like you, HYC served more than 630 students in 78 schools across the Valley. We are very excited about the opportunity to assist even more homeless youth in the coming school year. To do that, of course, we rely on support from our community. As we continue to expand into new schools and serve higher numbers of students, we also need to raise community awareness.

One way we do this is by hosting annual informational breakfasts that kick off our Empowering Youth Campaign. The breakfasts are completely free to attend, and their purpose is to inform and introduce the agency to the community, while celebrating the success of our youth. The events also provide HYC with an opportunity to explain how guests' contributions can provide support to homeless youth and be eligible for an Arizona state tax credit.

If you are interested in learning more about HYC's programs and students, or if you would like to help raise awareness by sharing our mission with your network of friends, colleagues, and family, we would love for you to join us at one of our upcoming Empowering Youth Breakfasts. The West Valley breakfast is scheduled for Thursday, October 25, 2018 at Tuscan Falls Golf Resort in Pebble Creek. In December, we will host a similar event in the Phoenix/East Valley region. The location and date for that event are pending, so watch our website for updates! (hyc.org)

To learn more about attending one of these events, or hosting a table to invite your network contacts, please email info@hyc.org. We hope to see you there!

HYC Volunteer Welcome Events



We are waving goodbye to the heat and saying hello to new events starting this fall at HYC. We are excited to announce the start of our New Volunteer Welcome Events, happening twice per month at Homeless Youth Connection in

Avondale. If you are interested in volunteering in any capacity with HYC, we ask that you attend one of these events to start the process. These events will allow us to help recruit

and sustain HYC volunteers, who are essential to the growth and success of HYC. We are also hoping this new process will introduce more awareness in the community and help place volunteers in projects that interest them while helping the structure of HYC. Our first Volunteer Welcome Event is scheduled for August 11 at 9:30 a.m. here at our Avondale office. **If you'd like to attend, or need more information, please email us at info@hyc.org.**



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HYC Connections

Summer/Fall 2018



Calendar of Events

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

we received \$20,000. Help us double that amount this year by registering your foursome today! For more information and to register, please visit: <https://bit.ly/2moxREy>

SATURDAY, AUGUST 11

Volunteer Welcome Event *HYC Offices, Avondale*

Join us at 9:30 a.m. to find out more about volunteering with HYC. We ask that you attend one of these events to start the process. These events allow us to help recruit and sustain HYC volunteers, who are essential to the growth and success of HYC. For more information, email: info@hycaz.org

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

West Valley Energy Open *Verrado Golf Club*



Registration:
7:00 a.m.
Shotgun Start:
8:30 a.m.

Includes luncheon celebration!

Keep the *West Valley Energy Open* on your golfing radar! The cooler weather will have finally arrived, and this event is the perfect opportunity to dust off the golf clubs. A portion of the proceeds will benefit the students of HYC. Last year,

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 25

Empowering Youth Breakfast

Tuscany Falls Golf Resort at PebbleCreek
16222 Clubhouse Drive
Goodyear, AZ 85395

Be sure to join us from 7:00-8:30 a.m. for this FREE event to learn more about our programs, successes and plans for the upcoming year. Please call 623-374-3747 to reserve your seat.