



# Connections

A Newsletter for Friends of Homeless Youth Connection

## HYC Holiday Meals, Gifts and Hope for Teens

*It's the most wonderful time of the year!*

Well, for most of us. Unfortunately, HYC students often worry so much about meeting their basic needs that they don't dare to dream of big Thanksgiving dinners or holiday presents. We want to show them that the holidays can be wonderful for them too, but to do that, we need your help!



For Thanksgiving, we need groups, organizations, and small businesses who would be willing to sponsor or provide the groceries for a holiday meal (turkey and all the trimmings) for 10 or more students and their families. We'll also need individuals who will be available and willing to deliver these meals to the students' homes in the days leading up to Thanksgiving.

If you're not able to help with Thanksgiving support, we also need individuals and organizations willing to 'adopt' a student (or multiple students) for the holidays through Homeless Youth Connection's "Holiday Hope for Teens" program. Each youth currently in HYC's program has submitted a list of needed items, as well as 'wish list' items (valued at less than \$50) to help them celebrate the holiday season. This year, approximately 300 teens will need the help of the community to grant their holiday wishes. Gifts can be wrapped, and notes and cards are welcome. Groups are also welcome to participate. Sponsors are needed now, and donations will be due by December 7, 2018 to ensure that they can be delivered to students' schools before the holiday break. Donations can be delivered to HYC at 9950 W. Van Buren in Avondale. **For more information, please call the office at 623-374-3747.**

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*Giving homeless youth a chance for a brighter future.*

## Sponsor Shout-Outs

We'd like to give a special round of thanks to just a few of our recent partners for helping us to serve the increasing number of students who come to HYC in need of help.

- **Cox Charities**
- **Fiesta Bowl Charities**
- **The Kemper and Ethel Marley Foundation**
- **Phoenix Suns**
- **Thunderbirds Charities**



We'd also like to express our gratitude to the many individuals and organizations that donated their time, talents, and physical resources to make sure our students had what they needed to get through the summer and start the school year.

- » **Torrid Clothing, Arrowhead Mall** – provides clothing for our students on an ongoing basis.
- » **Backpacks 4 Kids** – provided school supplies and backpacks for our students to return to school with.
- » **APS** – completed a donation drive to ensure our students had basic hygiene needs covered over the summer.
- » **West Valley Mavericks** – hosted Child Spree, which allowed more than 60 of HYC's students to go school shopping for new clothing at Kohl's.
- » **Arizona School Administrators** – hosted Shop to Give, an interactive event where shoppers got to purchase items for our students while enjoying a fun afternoon of contests and prizes.

Finally, we'd like to send a special shout out to the City of Buckeye's Mayor Meck and all of the contributors to the West Valley Energy Open, which benefited HYC as well. Congratulations on a successful golf tournament!



## Student Spotlight

Joey is 15 years old. He and his dad lived on their own while Joey was growing up, without much family support. Unfortunately, Joey and his dad were in a severe car accident last year, and Joey's dad was hospitalized for a lengthy stay. Thankfully, Joey's injuries were less severe, but with no one else to look out for him, Joey had to learn how to do what he could to survive on his own. He lived with different friends, bouncing from house to house when he had overstayed his welcome. He asked for odd jobs outside the hardware store, and he was even arrested for getting caught stealing food from a grocery store. Joey finally realized that he couldn't do it all on his own, and he reached out for help at his school. HYC was able to provide Joey with basic needs and resources and help him find somewhere stable to call home. Joey still visits his dad any time he wants, but with the stability that HYC helped to provide, Joey can now focus on school and his future.

## Coordinate a Donation Drive in Your Community!

With the holiday season just around the corner, Homeless Youth Connection would love your help to ensure that we can meet our students' basic needs. A donation drive is a great way to support our efforts, and we promise that your donations will go to work immediately. Here are some suggestions for hosting a meaningful donation drive:

The most urgent (and often neglected) need is for gift cards. Our students can usually get breakfast and lunch at school, but often lack resources for dinner, weekends, and holiday breaks. These youth need resources for food, and they look to HYC for help. Food gift cards for \$5 or \$10 from places such as McDonald's, Chick-fil-A, Chipotle, and Subway would be a great help. Other types of gift cards that would benefit our students are grocery store cards, clothing or shoe store cards, and gas cards in \$10 to \$30 increments.

Basic hygiene items that most of us take for granted are also needed throughout the year. Items like deodorant, soap, shampoo and conditioner, feminine hygiene items, sunscreen and toothpaste are always welcome. Full size items are preferred, but we can also use those hotel mini toiletries you've collected on your travels to put together emergency packs.

Finally, think about collecting winter clothing. Since our students tend to move around a lot, they don't usually have a large wardrobe. When summer heat finally gives way to the cooler months, many of our students don't have jackets or sweaters, long pants, or shoes that aren't sandals and flip-flops. As you update your own wardrobes, please consider donating your gently used items to the students at HYC.

Contact us at 623-374-3747 or [info@hyc.org](mailto:info@hyc.org) if you are thinking about hosting a drive. We'd be happy to provide you with some resources and tools to make it easy for you to accomplish your goal! You can also follow us on Facebook at: [facebook.com/HomelessYouthConnectionAZ/](https://www.facebook.com/HomelessYouthConnectionAZ/) where we post about specific items we need as the needs arise.

With your help, we can ensure these students have a happy, healthy future.

## Board Spotlight:

**Kate Hopeman, HYC Board President**



Homeless Youth Connection relies on its Board of Directors to steer us toward sustainability and growth to assist the ever-growing number of students who need our services. Thankfully, we are blessed with many individuals whose passion to serve our youth is evident in everything they do. Kate Hopeman is one such individual. She joined the Board of Directors in 2015, and recently was elected to

serve as Board President. We asked Kate to summarize her experience with HYC so that we could share it with you. Here's what she had to say:

"Joining the HYC Board in 2015 has led to three of the most gratifying and interesting years I've ever experienced. I'd always loved helping underprivileged youth, and I thought being on the Board of HYC would expand my level of service and hopefully contribute to the growth of the organization. And it has. But wow—I didn't expect how much it would impact my personal life, and how much I would learn and grow as a person as a result. I've been heavily involved in HYC's mentoring and host family programs, helping out at many levels with more than 10 of our students. All of their stories are heartbreaking at first, but I soon realized that they are really inspiring. These are students who will stop at nothing to succeed, and they get the chance to do that through HYC. They have enhanced my life in so many ways. I would strongly recommend to anyone that they become directly involved with our youth through mentoring or the host family program; it is a truly rewarding experience. I look forward to leading Homeless Youth Connection, and by extension, its students, to even greater heights during my tenure as Board President."

## Learn About HYC

Have you ever wanted to know more about the good work that Homeless Youth Connection does, and to learn how you can become more involved? Every month, the Community Engagement team offers three different opportunities to learn. Our **Volunteer Welcome Event** is for those individuals who are new to the HYC family and are interested in learning more about HYC and ways to volunteer. It is a great way to get an overview of the entire program. **The Connections Tour** is for people trying to connect an organization with HYC to the benefit of both. You might be interested in connecting your business, your church group, or other philanthropic team. Lastly, our **Taco 'Bout It Tuesday** is geared specifically toward people interested in learning more about our Host Family program which provides housing to youth who are on their own.



**The Volunteer Welcome Event** is held the second Saturday of each month, during the morning. Our next one will be Saturday, November 10 at 9:30 a.m.



**Our Connections Tour** is held the first Thursday of each month, during the morning. Our next one will be Thursday, November 8 at 10:00 a.m.



**Taco 'Bout it Tuesday** is held the third Tuesday of each month, in the evening. Our next one will be Tuesday, November 20 at 6:00 p.m.

To reserve a place for one or more of these events, please email Mindi Walker at [mwalker@hycaz.org](mailto:mwalker@hycaz.org) or call the HYC office at 623-374-3747.

### Save the Date!

SWIFT TRANSPORTATION

**LOVE RUN  
5K**

**FEBRUARY 9, 2019**

*A Benefit for Homeless Youth Connection*

Lace up your sneakers and get ready for HYC's first ever 5K run! Presented by Swift Transportation, the Love Run will kick off on February 9, 2019, so mark your calendars. Proceeds from the event will benefit HYC, so we will need the community's support to make the event a successful one! Stay tuned to our website ([hycaz.org](http://hycaz.org)) and social media for more information regarding this exciting event!

### Want to make sure you're up-to-date with the movement to end youth homelessness?

Follow our social media to stay even more connected! 'Like' us on Facebook and follow us on Instagram to make a difference in a teens life today.



**f** [facebook.com/HomelessYouthConnectionAZ](https://www.facebook.com/HomelessYouthConnectionAZ)  
**Instagram** [HYC\\_Arizona](https://www.instagram.com/HYC_Arizona)



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[hycaz.org](http://hycaz.org)

HYC Connections

Fall/Winter 2018



## Calendar of Events

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

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8**

**Connections Tour**  
*HYC Offices, Avondale*

Join us at **10:00 a.m.** to find out more about connecting your business, church group or other philanthropic team with HYC.

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 10**

**Volunteer Welcome Event**  
*HYC Offices, Avondale*

Join us at **9:30 a.m.** to find out more about volunteer opportunities with HYC.

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 20**

**Taco 'Bout it Tuesday**  
*HYC Offices, Avondale*

**6:00 p.m.**

Specifically for people interested in learning more about our Host Family program which provides housing to youth who are on their own.



**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 4**

**Empowering Youth Breakfast**

*Phoenix Country Club  
2901 N. 7th Street,  
Phoenix, AZ 85014*

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.

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 9**

**Swift Transportation Love Run 5K**

**SAVE THE DATE!**  
More details coming soon!