



You Can Make a Difference in the Lives of Youth Experiencing Homelessness

The holidays are a special time, bringing together family and friends, exchanging gifts, enjoying sweet treats, and listening to nostalgic holiday music. There are more tasks needing our attention and we are often managing more than average, but we know it will come to an end after New Year's Day and it will be worth the magic the holidays bring.

But for youth experiencing homelessness the holidays bring many emotions, including fear, anxiety, uncertainty, and sadness. They are managing obstacles and challenges to survive and get through each day. The holidays bring another level of stress and highlight, for them, what is missing in their lives.

Below we share the stories of two youth who are making their way with help from HYC, and the challenges they are bravely facing during this holiday season. With support from the community and HYC, our youth feel someone cares, and they can begin to believe again—in others and in themselves.

It's not too late to sponsor a youth for the holidays—or any time of year!
For more information, please contact Robin Telle at Rtelle@hycaz.org.



BRANDI* is a senior who attends West Point High School in the Tolleson Union High School District. She joined HYC at the beginning of this school year. Over the summer, her mom went to California, saying it would be a quick trip, but never returned and stopped paying rent. Brandi was evicted and has not heard from her mom since she left. Brandi lost everything after being evicted.

Thankfully she was able to stay with various friends for a while. She tried navigating the system on her own, calling possible shelters, and was about to go into a shelter when someone from the apartment complex said they would take her in. Brandi stayed there for a few days but was asked to leave when the renter had to go out of town to care for an ailing family member. Brandi's coach from school found out about her living situation and took her in. She has been doing well since being there and the coach is interested in becoming her official host family through HYC.

Brandi's HYC youth coach is working with her to get both AHCCCS (Arizona's Medicaid program) and SNAP (food benefits to low-income families). They are also working on getting her State ID and Social Security card. Through everything she's faced, Brandi's attitude has been great. She has experienced so much rejection and hardships, but she remains strong and has a great outlook on things. She continues to look forward and put in the work to get to where she needs to be. After high school, Brandi plans to attend college so she can continue focusing on her future.



SABRINA* is a senior at Camelback High School and joined the HYC program in October 2023. She currently lives in a domestic violence shelter with her mother and siblings. The toughest challenge Sabrina is facing,

is having to go in and out of shelters due to her family history of domestic violence.

Sabrina's HYC youth coach, who is helping her find scholarships for college, has referred Sabrina to Neighborhood Ministries for help in finding employment, and has provided essential items such as hygiene products. Thanks to generous donors, HYC was also able to provide a new laptop so Sabrina can stay focused on her education.

Sabrina's short-term goals are to pass all her classes with A's, so she can have a good GPA once she graduates to qualify for more scholarships. She would also like to find part-time employment.

Sabrina is currently enrolled in all honors classes and is also taking college classes through her high school. She has applied to Northern Arizona University, Arizona State University, and University of Arizona and has been accepted to all three schools. Her first choice is to attend Northern Arizona University and she would like to become an anesthesiologist.

Sabrina's youth coach said "I am most proud of Sabrina for continuing to put her education first and for staying resilient although she has moved around several times and has witnessed domestic violence throughout her life by her parents."

HYC is proud of Sabrina's resiliency and all she has accomplished. We are excited to see what her future holds.

**Names have been changed to protect student identities.*

Help Yourself by Helping Youth Experiencing Homelessness in Arizona

Take Advantage of the Arizona Charitable Tax Credit



If you are a resident of Arizona, one of the easiest ways to make a difference in the lives of youth experiencing homelessness is through the Arizona Charitable Tax Credit.

This tax credit, which is separate from the Education and Foster Care charitable tax credits, is a way for state taxpayers to redirect their state tax dollars to organizations and causes that are important to them. The state of Arizona provides an incredible incentive for taxpayers who donate to certain qualifying charities like HYC.

When you make a donation to HYC, you can receive a dollar-for-dollar tax credit when you file your Arizona state tax return—up to \$421 for individuals and \$841 for those filing jointly. Donate to HYC by April 15, 2024 and you may be eligible for this tax credit. HYC's Qualifying Charitable Tax Code is **20200**. Donors are required to use this code when taking the tax credit on their state income tax returns.

There are more than 8,700 homeless youth in grades 9-12 living in Arizona, and more than 1,100 of these youth are unaccompanied. Often, this is a result of circumstances beyond their control and the consequences can be devastating.

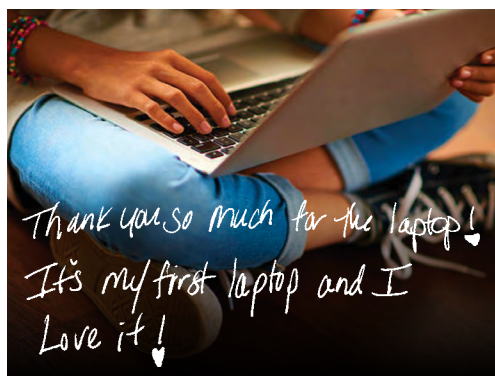
Your support of HYC will provide youth impacted by homelessness with comprehensive case management as well as with clothing, food, school supplies, medical appointments and prescriptions, and housing resources.

Visit hycaz.org/arizona-tax-credit to take advantage of this opportunity to help youth experiencing homelessness in Arizona. For details, consult your tax professional.

Bridging a Tech Gap

As a high school senior, Rayna* has dreams of her future, but these dreams became complicated without access to the resources to explore career options, research colleges, and complete applications and scholarships. HYC helped her overcome many barriers to stay in school. However, her new challenge was navigating the bridge from high school to college.

Rayna's school computer had limited access to the internet, which hindered her search for college websites and preparation resources. Her HYC youth coach recognized this frustration for Rayna. The youth coach connected



with HYC development department for a solution to the student's dilemma—a laptop computer from a recent in-kind technology donation.

Through the generous in-kind donation of laptops from SWK Technologies earlier in the year, HYC could provide Rayna with a laptop for her college exploration. She can now work on her education goals such as applying for college, completing her FAFSA and writing personal statements to complete college applications.

Additionally, when Rayna starts her first year of college, she can continue using the laptop for managing her academic career and assignments.

*Name has been changed to protect student identity.

HYC Volunteer Spotlight:

Susan Loga, SWK Technologies



What started as a day of company connections at the SWK Technologies “One Voice” conference, turned into a day of opportunity for Susan Loga. After learning about HYC during a conference presentation, something sparked her interest.

Her next step was to attend the Hatcher Residential Open House. As Susan learned more about the HYC program, she witnessed first-hand how HYC was transforming the lives of youth experiencing homelessness.

“I was attracted to HYC because I saw all the ways that my life and business experience might help young people,” shares Loga. I felt the need to be part of the mission of this organization.

Recently, Susan attended an HYC Information and Volunteer Orientation session. In learning more about the work of HYC, she is open to serving as needed. Her current focus will be bringing her skills to the resource room, assisting with the processing of in-kind donations. In time, she believes that her overall experience will allow her to expand her role as a volunteer.

As a child who grew up in a poor family with challenges, she understands how the programs and services of HYC can be life-changing in building a successful future. “I know as an adult what a difference it would have made in my life knowing that an organization like HYC, with trusted adults, was in my community to guide and encourage me,” said Susan.

HYC STAFF ADDITIONS

Meet Our Newest Team Member

HYC continues to experience growth in our services. We are excited to introduce a new member to the HYC team.



Dinu Desilva
Finance Manager

For more staff member information, complete bios are available on our website:
hyc.org/hyc-staff-bios



A Difficult Decision

HYC's Transitional Host Home in Goodyear, which is a partnership with Catholic Charities and Maricopa County that provides a safe and nurturing environment for youth experiencing homelessness will no longer be a housing resource for HYC youth. This very difficult decision was made with the support of the HYC board of directors.

For the better part of 18 months the home was not being utilized as it was designed. Youth would come and stay for a couple days and then leave. Many reported it was difficult to get to school and school activities, public transportation was not easily accessible and did not go where they needed to get to, it was too far from their connections and familiar community. They chose to stay with friends or family members near their schools.

We consulted with the HYC board and Catholic Charities and agreed that if the home was not being occupied by youth it was best to identify a program that could take advantage of the home and provide a safe haven for others.

We did not make this decision lightly, and although we are sad not to be using the home for HYC youth, we are very happy that the home will continue to serve the community and those in need. HYC still has housing resources for our youth through our Host Family program and our Transitional Living Program.

It is important to know HYC continues to provide services to youth in the West Valley including students attending Agua Fria High School District, Buckeye Union High School District, Peoria Unified School District and Tolleson Union High School District.



We have a new mailing address!

9100 N. 2nd Street, Suite 301 • Phoenix, AZ 85020

602-847-4300 • hycaz.org

HELP US CONNECT TO YOU!



Please let us know your preferred method of communication by taking a quick 2-minute survey at:

surveymonkey.com/r/HYC-AZ

HYConnections

Homeless Youth Connection Newsletter

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Did you know?

On any given night in the U.S., approximately 41,000 unaccompanied youth ages 13-25 experience homelessness.



Across the nation, there are thousands of young people without a permanent roof over their heads, and the numbers are growing. Annually, 1 in 10 young adults ages 18-25, and 1 in 30 youth ages 13-17, experience some form of homelessness.

Most youth do not become homeless by choice. Many different factors contribute to youth homelessness, but

studies suggest that there are common paths to homelessness for young people. Most youth experiencing homelessness have either run away, been kicked out of unstable home environments, abandoned by their families or caregivers, involved with public systems (foster care, juvenile justice, mental health), or have a history of residential instability. For these youth, the classroom could be the one safe, stable place in their day-to-day lives. However, being forced to deal with significant challenges outside of the classroom inevitably impacts academic performance.