

# HYCconnections

A NEWSLETTER FOR FRIENDS OF HOMELESS YOUTH CONNECTION

FALL 2020

## Providing Stability During the Pandemic

*Youth Experiencing Homelessness Need Our Support Now More Than Ever*



*We have implemented some creative approaches and are committed to making a difference by providing stability as our youth stay in school and work toward graduation.*

### Dear Friends,

We are so grateful to our community for your generous support and your concern for how our youth are doing during this ever-changing and uncertain time. As you can imagine, there are more questions than answers. However, we remain focused on providing services to the youth who rely on HYC, while keeping our staff, youth, and volunteers safe.

During the past five months, many of you have helped HYC by hosting hygiene, school supplies and gift card drives to support our youth. Many individuals have contributed by ordering from our online wish lists with items being delivered to us. We are truly humbled by the support and concern for the youth in our community who are experiencing homelessness.

Unfortunately, none of us really know what the next few months or year will look like. With unemployment reaching an all-time high, we anticipate there being a greater need for HYC services. Youth who are experiencing homelessness—some for the first time—will be leaning on HYC, and in turn we will need to lean on community supporters like you.

We know some of our donors and volunteers have experienced job loss and

illness in their families and are managing challenges of their own—our thoughts are with them. This is an extremely difficult time for so many.

We are working hard to continue to provide basic needs, case management, counseling and housing resources to youth experiencing homelessness. We have implemented some creative approaches and are committed to making a difference by providing stability as our youth stay in school and work toward graduation.

If you are able to support homeless youth staying in school with a financial donation, please consider doing so. And, if you are in a position to become a monthly donor, we would greatly appreciate the dependable support to provide resources to our youth.

We could not do the work we do without you! Thank you for all you do to help youth experiencing homelessness stay in school and graduate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dawn Bogart".

Dawn Bogart  
CEO, Homeless Youth Connection

Arizona  
Charitable  
Tax Credit



**DID YOU KNOW?** Depending on your Arizona tax liability, your donation may be eligible for the Arizona Charitable Tax Credit. Find out more at [hyc.org](http://hyc.org)

## MEET A FEW HYC YOUTH...



**MEET SCARLETT...** Scarlett and her mother lived with her grandfather for years. But when Scarlett's grandfather died and her mother was laid off from work, the family was unable to pay rent, and they became homeless. Scarlett stayed with her best friend's family while her mother couch surfed and was sometimes forced to sleep on the street. After learning about her situation, the school referred Scarlett to HYC. The family with whom Scarlett was staying became her HYC Host Family, which allowed them to receive a monetary stipend to assist them in caring for Scarlett in addition to benefiting from support of the HYC Youth Coach. HYC provided Scarlett with food, hygiene supplies, school supplies and mental health support services to help her cope with stress. When her mother secured housing, Scarlett was happy to be able to move back in with her mother. With the support of HYC, Scarlett managed to consistently attend school, keep up her grades and graduate. She is now enrolled in college to study business management.

**MEET JAMES...** Throughout the past year, James, a junior in high school, has faced many frequent obstacles. After being hit by a car on his bike, James has gone through intensive physical therapy to heal and recover from his injuries. Shortly after his accident, James' mother also became injured which consequently led to her losing her job. Unable to make ends meet, James and his mom and sibling were eventually evicted from their home. After staying with friends, James' older sister was able to get the family an apartment. However, with his mother not working, the full financial burden fell on James' sister to keep the household afloat. During all of this, James had been actively receiving services at HYC. When COVID-19 affected the family, James' sister got her hours cut at work and James felt it was time for him to start contributing financially. With the help and support of his HYC Youth Coach, James was able to secure a job at Fry's. James has been able to provide for his family while doing school online since March. HYC has also supported James during these trying times with frequent case management, food box deliveries, gift cards for essential supplies and a laptop. James continues to relentlessly work and is expected to graduate this school year.

**MEET CASSIE...** Cassie is a recent high school graduate who endured a lot of financial hardship and emotional stress during her senior year. She moved to Arizona from California, and in addition to adjusting to a new school, her mother was struggling financially and they were evicted from their apartment. Her family then moved in with a friend where they all shared one bedroom, and shortly after, into an emergency family shelter. Things began to improve when Cassie was referred to HYC by her school. HYC provided her with basic needs and personal necessities such as clothing items, hygiene, school supplies and gift cards. Christmas was special and memorable last year for the first time in her life thanks to HYC supporters. Her HYC Youth Coach helped her develop a plan for the future, and in January of 2020, Cassie and her family moved out of the shelter and into an apartment. Cassie also began working part-time while completing her senior year. The COVID-19 pandemic added another major challenge: online classes and the lack of resources to attend class. Fortunately, HYC was able to provide a laptop which allowed Cassie to do her schoolwork, and her HYC Youth Coach helped her connect with resources for college. Cassie graduated in June and is attending Pima Medical Institute. Commuting two hours by bus, she now works full-time and is determined to get a promotion and save enough to buy a car.

## Help Us Introduce HYC to Your Community

**These days, the one constant is change.**

HYC is changing our annual breakfast in-person event and how we connect with the community. This year we are planning a youth-led type of broadcast called **Get Connected**. The youth will share their stories about being homeless, their journey to stay in school and their plan for the future.



With a new event comes new opportunities, and we need your help to make this another successful year.

**We are looking for volunteers to be Virtual Event Hosts, and it's as easy as 1, 2, 3...**

- 1 Invite at least 10 people** from your network of friends and family who are not familiar with Homeless Youth Connection and the work we do.
- 2 Confirm your attendees** with HYC staff to receive event materials.
- 3 Host a virtual viewing party online** just by clicking the link for the presentation on Wednesday, October 28.

**It really is that easy!** If you're interested in being a virtual event host or would like additional information, contact Dawn Boeck at [dmboeck@hycaz.org](mailto:dmboeck@hycaz.org).

## VOLUNTEER DRIVERS NEEDED!



As you are aware, the start of the school year looks different this year than in the past. With most schools teaching remotely, the youth in our program do not have easy access to basic items such as hygiene products, school supplies and clothing on a regular basis. This is where you come in! We are looking for volunteers to help deliver basic needs items to HYC youth throughout the Valley using a no-contact approach. Bagged items will be picked up from our HYC office in Avondale and then delivered to our youth. You will be provided with the student's name, address, and a list of items you are delivering.

Volunteers must be 18 or older and must have or be willing to obtain an Arizona fingerprint clearance card. A clean driving record and current auto insurance are also required. For more information or to complete a volunteer application, contact Jeannette Cruz at [jcruz@hycaz.org](mailto:jcruz@hycaz.org)

## HYC Founder Larry Cervarich Retires



When Larry Cervarich founded HYC 10 years ago, he aimed to provide basic needs to youth experiencing homeless in the West Valley and create awareness about the struggle they face each day while trying to stay in high school.

*Those who lead  
by example and  
demonstrate passion  
for what they do  
make it much easier  
for their followers  
to do the same.*

—MARSHALL GOLDSMITH

"I remember I saw the words, 'homeless youth' in an article in the West Valley View newspaper and I couldn't fathom that there was such a thing out there. When I first met with a counselor at Agua Fria Union High School, she was startled that someone from the community stepped forward to want to help these kids," Cervarich said. "I can still picture myself walking into that counselor's office that day to learn more about youth in homeless situations. After that, I put together a committee and we focused on the essentials—hygiene items—and we thought we were being heroes just by

doing that. There was a local church that surprised me with an eight to ten-foot-high pile of supplies, and I remember how we all cried. From that point on, I never stopped. When I look at today, we're going beyond that. We want to see that students graduate high school."

In its first year, HYC assisted 47 youth with basic needs. Today, HYC has served more than 3,000 youth.

Cervarich admitted that transitioning into retirement might be a bittersweet journey. He notes that in the past decade, he has seen HYC's youth flourish. Many have returned to visit as college students, members of the armed forces, and soon-to-be-married.

"Retirement is not something I thought I'd see, but I'm moving on with the feeling that HYC is in good hands," Cervarich said. "My hat's off to the staff and the youth coaches, who are on the frontline in the middle of a pandemic, the donors, volunteers... thank you to everyone that has played a part to help HYC succeed."

Cervarich is looking forward to working with his new charity, Meals of Joy, which delivers hot, fresh and nutritious meals to seniors in the West Valley who are unable to prepare their own food.

"My joy is fixing circumstances and making them better. I like to roll up my sleeves and see what I can do. I can't help but get excited," Cervarich said. "I'm going to be 81 years old soon and I'm still going."

### VOLUNTEER. DONATE. ADVOCATE.

*Help us to continue Larry's vision.*

Larry Cervarich led by example. He learned about a need, went into action and asked some friends to lend a hand. Once he started, he couldn't stop—the youth were counting on him. For years, Larry led by example and activated many in our community to also get involved to help youth experiencing homelessness stay in school and graduate. **Contact HYC today to get involved.**

## HYC Offers Services for First-Year College Students

This new school year, we are offering services and resources to HYC youth who graduated high school and are beginning their first year of college. Research shows approximately 33% of students drop out in their first year of college. HYC is committed to supporting our youth during this transition year from high school to college. The college services include an expansion of the housing program, and an opportunity to learn additional life skills. In early August, our first residents moved into our Transitional Host Home, a safe transitional living space designated for youth attending school who are experiencing homelessness.

### *Meet a few of the youth in our college program:*

**DANIEL** became homeless during high school when his parents were incarcerated. He graduated high school and is working on a dual major: Music Education and Law. Ultimately, he would like to become an attorney, however, he enjoys teaching so being a choir teacher is his second choice. He hopes to do both.

**ANGEL** left home to finish high school when his father did not support his dreams to get an education. He is studying Criminal Justice and wants to become a police officer.

**PAYTON** became homeless after her mother kicked her out on her 18th birthday at the beginning of her senior year of high school. After sleeping in her car and couch surfing, she was able to secure a place with a family member. Payton has requested financial education and help with budgeting and saving money to her reach her financial goals as she begins her journey into adulthood.

*\*Names have been changed*





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## HELP US CONNECT TO YOU!



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

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HYC-AZ>

## HYConnections

Homeless Youth Connection Newsletter

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## Give Hope Every Month

*Your Ongoing Contribution Makes a Difference*

Throughout the year, HYC works to eliminate barriers to graduation for youth experiencing homelessness and creates lasting solutions for a successful future through community support and increased awareness. With your help as a monthly donor, we can continue to eliminate those barriers as a community. Your monthly gift means more consistent and timely funding, allowing HYC to be strategic in our growth and better plan our resources to offer critical services to homeless youth seeking help.

Choose the amount you want to donate each month to help give hope to youth experiencing homelessness. **Your ongoing contribution will make a big difference.**

**\$10 PER MONTH** will help contribute to medical co-pays and prescriptions or bus passes/transportation

**\$25 PER MONTH** will help contribute to technology support for students' remote learning

**\$45 PER MONTH** will help contribute to meals for students without access to food

**\$95 PER MONTH** will cover HYC services for one student for one year

**\$165 PER MONTH** will cover one week of emergency home services for one student in urgent crisis



You can donate monthly by check or credit card. Each January, we will send you a tax receipt for your giving history from the previous year. Visit [hyc.org/donate](http://hyc.org/donate) to enroll in our monthly giving program. **Contact Dawn Boeck, [dmboeck@hyc.org](mailto:dmboeck@hyc.org) with questions or for additional information.**