



Host Families Provide Support to HYC Unaccompanied Youth

There are thousands of youth experiencing homelessness in Arizona. While most of these youth are with their families, in a shelter, at an extended stay motel, or doubled up with relatives, about 30% are unaccompanied. Unaccompanied youth are on their own and are homeless without a guardian or parent to help care for them. These youth do whatever is needed to have a place to sleep, often by couch surfing, bartering sex or labor for shelter, and sleeping in their cars. HYC meets this need by offering safe and stable housing to unaccompanied youth through its Host Family Housing program. Community volunteers receive a stipend to help offset costs while serving as an HYC host family for the academic year, and HYC provides case management support and essential needs for the youth. Host families eliminate the worry of housing so that HYC youth can focus on school and their future.



Josh and Jen Cluff and their two sons. HYC student not pictured for privacy reasons.

Josh and Jen Cluff joined the Host Family Housing program in January of 2022. At the time, Allison* was attending school with and was a friend of the Cluff's youngest son. Josh and Jen knew of Allison's situation, as they knew her family and were aware of what was happening. After the school was notified of what was happening, they connected Allison with an HYC youth coach. Because Allison was able to self-identify a potential host family, the process happened quickly. John Nesbitt, Host Family Youth Coach, reached out to the

Cluff's, explained the program, determined it was a good fit for everyone and Allison was placed in a safe and stable environment for the remainder of her senior year in high school. Not only did Allison graduate on time, but she was also a recipient of one of the Dorothy Fisher Scholarships.

The Cluff's generosity has helped Allison have a safe and stable home so she can stay in school and graduate, and HYC provided crucial support and resources to help this host family thrive. Whenever there were struggles, as there are in any family, HYC was able to provide support and options so the family could work together and find the best solution for everyone. "Having the connection to HYC when issues arose was helpful as it provided reassurance that we were doing the right thing for Allison and our family," said Josh.

The Cluff's have changed the life of an unaccompanied youth and become part of the solution to youth homelessness in Arizona. HYC equipped them with the necessary resources and support to ensure Allison can lead a healthy and stable life. "We would definitely recommend hosting for other families. It was such a rewarding experience and so much help for a child in need."

HYC is in need of more host families like the Cluff's to make an impact in the lives of youth experiencing homelessness in our community.

Are you interested in learning more about HYC's Host Family Housing program? Contact John Nesbitt, Host Family Youth Coach, at jnesbitt@hyc.org or 602-847-4300 x 114 to see how you can get involved.

**Name has been changed to protect identity.*

Bring the Holidays to a Teen in Need

PLEASE CONSIDER BECOMING A HOLIDAY SPONSOR

It's October and the holidays are almost here! At Homeless Youth Connection, plans are in motion to ensure a special festive season for our youth. In previous years, many of you have sponsored a food basket or fulfilled a student's wish list. We appreciate your dedication to creating a wonderful holiday season and making a difference in the life of a young person experiencing homelessness.

This year for the Fall and Winter holidays, we are excited about a few modifications to our previous holiday activities. We have streamlined and created a simple experience for you as well as provided an opportunity for youth to participate in their own holiday traditions.

Fall Holiday Meal

While embracing cultural holiday traditions or participating in Thanksgiving activities, it is important that all youth (and their families) be able to celebrate their traditional fall holiday. To ensure they are able to purchase and enjoy the food of their choice, we are asking friends of HYC to donate grocery gift cards from Safeway, Fry's, Bashas, or Walmart. We will distribute gift cards valued up to \$70 to a youth and their family or to an individual youth.

TO BECOME A *Holiday Sponsor,*

or for more information, contact Robin Telle, rtelle@hycaz.org or call 602-847-4300 ext. 106.

We anticipate serving more youth this year. Your consideration of a Fall Meal and/or Winter Gift-Giving sponsorship is appreciated.

Want to support a youth in an easy way during the holidays? Make an online donation at hycaz.org. In the message section, note the sponsorship of your choice: Fall Holiday Meal or Winter Gift-Giving.



Winter Holiday GIFT GIVING

For Winter gifts this year, we are asking our community to donate holiday bags filled with gift cards and small presents. This is your opportunity to be creative with unique gifts and treats. Keep in mind that youth celebrate a variety of winter holidays including Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, and Three Kings. You receive youth information after signing up for a Winter Holiday sponsorship.

Your holiday gift bag sponsorship presents a powerful exercise in self-confidence and money management for youth, which creates a positive impact that resonates beyond the holiday season.

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 on your Arizona state return—up to \$400 for individuals and \$800 for those filing jointly. Donate \$800 to HYC by April 15, 2024 and you may be eligible to get \$800 back on your Arizona tax return. HYC's Qualifying Charitable Tax Code is **20200**. Donors are required to use this code when taking the tax credit on their 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.

HYC STAFF ADDITIONS

Meet Our Newest Team Members

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



Stefany Chavez
Youth Coach, Flagstaff



Logan Donahue
Resident Assistant



Isaiah Gomez
Housing Program Manager



Dulce Hernandez
Resident Assistant



Anita Mamy
Program Manager



Angelica Ortiz
Resident Assistant

For more staff member information, you can read their complete bios on our website:
hycaz.org/hyc-staff-bios



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

HYCconnections

Homeless Youth Connection Newsletter

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Did you know?

*Nationally, 87% of youth experiencing homelessness are more likely to drop out of school than their stably-housed peers.**



Without their diploma, these youth face tremendous challenges obtaining gainful employment that pays a living wage and provides access to health insurance and benefits. This barrier to higher pay and benefits can lead many youth experiencing homelessness to experience chronic homelessness—regularly lacking a safe, stable, and secure housing situation.

Homeless Youth Connection plays an important role in ending youth homelessness and preventing chronic homelessness as these youth become adults. HYC offers a comprehensive services program that engages high school-aged youth who are experiencing homelessness. HYC assists them in overcoming barriers to completing high school, graduating, and creating a sustainable plan for their future. On average, HYC provides services to more than 700 youth annually and services are provided at no cost to the youth, schools, districts, or the state.

*Hidden in Plain Sight report