

REFLECTIONS ON 2022

Looking Ahead to a Fresh New Year

We are pleased to share the successes, challenges and opportunities we faced during 2021-22, as well as plans to better position HYC services for youth experiencing homelessness in the upcoming 2022-23 school year.



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HYC PROGRAM SERVICES

As we reflect back on this past year, we are amazed on how fast it went by and how many opportunities we have experienced for growth of services, as well as expansion of the organization. We begin each year with focus on our youth. Our goal is to make the greatest impact that will benefit youth through our services, our engagement and our resources that will result in sustainable change for their future.

Thanks to our community partners, donors, volunteers, board and staff, HYC had an incredibly productive year with exciting opportunities.

*Eliminates Barriers
Empowers Youth
Creates Lasting Solutions*

Youth Served & Graduation

This past year we were extremely encouraged to see enrollment increase and youth returning to school following the impact of the pandemic. Referrals to HYC by school liaisons were returning to pre-pandemic numbers.

During the 2021-2022 school year, HYC served a total of 513 students, including 79 freshmen, 102 sophomores, 102 juniors, 178 seniors, and 13 college students, as well as 39 HYC alumni who participated in aftercare services.

In May 2022 there were 121 seniors actively participating in the HYC program and of those, 108 graduated, and 13 had plans to attend summer school or another year of high school to make up classes and credit shortfalls. Despite two and a half years of challenges due to the pandemic—school closures, absenteeism, mental health issues and learning loss—over 95% of HYC seniors stayed in school and completed their education.

In addition, of the seniors who graduated high school, 67 decided to go on to post-secondary education and enrolled in college this fall. Six registered to serve in the military, 33 youth planned to enter the workforce and two were undecided.

Youth Needs Changed... Post-Pandemic

It has been our experience that approximately 70% of HYC youth required basic case management services which includes essential needs such as hygiene items and school supplies, and approximately two in-person case management meetings per month, as well as communication via email, text, phone, Instagram and/or other social media.

While 30% required more extensive case management which included basic services, mental health services, housing or shelter assistance, employment services, as well as more frequent meetings with their youth coach—as often as four to six times a month. This is no longer the case.

The lingering effects of the pandemic significantly impacted the stability and needs of the youth HYC serves. Some of the factors included remote learning, mental health issues, anxiety, rental eviction, and lack of affordable housing. With the increased factors impacting the youth who required a more extensive level of case management this need has increased to 70 percent! This greater demand and the need for more comprehensive case management required modifications in our case management model to provide more comprehensive and frequent services to a significantly larger number of youth than ever before.

The greater demand on the youth services staff required a shift in our case management model. The youth coach team were spending more time with their youth, providing additional resources including referrals for mental health counseling, assistance with employment services and help with obtaining shelter through our own housing program or in collaboration with other community shelter providers.

At the beginning of the school year, there were nine youth coaches to serve 130 high schools in Maricopa County and Flagstaff. Anticipating working with 600 students, which

would equate to approximately 65 students per youth coach caseload. In past years, this caseload was manageable because the needs of the youth were more balanced between those who required basic support and those who needed more extensive case management. In addition, the youth would begin to stabilize as the year progressed for those who came into the program at the beginning of the school year.

However, at mid-year, the youth coaches' caseloads were averaging 40 students monthly with youth requiring more extensive case management. We knew the caseloads would increase during the spring months which would not be sustainable for our staff and not offer the quality of service we strive to provide. We needed to reduce the caseload. As a result, we added an additional youth coach to help with the referrals and case management, as well as, had our two program managers provide additional support with case management services. We see this trend for greater needs of service continuing and have hired additional youth coaches to support the need for more extensive case management in the upcoming year.

Employment

For some of our youth, employment is a critical factor to contribute to family finances, as well as for youth on their own who need a job to support themselves. Two years ago, HYC began a partnership with St. Joseph the Worker (SJW) and Trinity Opportunity Alliance (TOA) to assist our youth with employment opportunities and workforce readiness. This past year, 72 youth participated in the program to learn about resume writing, interviewing skills and coaching for employment while in high school and after graduation. Almost 30 youth obtained employment with the support of SJW and TOA. The average salary range is \$12.15/hour to \$20/hour. Types of employment included fast food, movie theatre, hotel work, restaurant, retail, landscaping, warehouse,

and customer service. It should be noted that some HYC youth secured employment opportunities on their own.

Host Family Program & Housing

HYC's innovative approach to provide housing to unaccompanied youth is our Host Family program. The Host Family model is the foundation of our housing efforts and allows the youth to live in a stable, nurturing environment with a community member in the neighborhood of their school. This allows the youth easy access to participate in sports, clubs, arts (theatre, band, etc.). The Host Family receives a stipend while HYC provides case management and ensures all necessary needs are met. During this past year, 37 unaccompanied youth were served in the Host Family program. Of those, 16 were attending college, 19 were seniors in high school, one was a junior, and one was a sophomore.

A second model for housing HYC offers is our Transitional Housing Program—which also can provide emergency housing for youth in our program. We have one facility in Goodyear which offers housing to HYC alumni who are youth needing additional support and stability. In addition, this facility can house high school youth over 18 who have not yet identified a Host Family. In the upcoming year HYC will add transitional housing for up to 20 youth in our new Phoenix location.

This new facility will provide housing for high school youth over 18 who will enter the Host Family program or for HYC alumni first year college youth.

Youth Advisory Council

The Youth Advisory Council (YAC) was formed in March of 2022. Members consist of current HYC students, as well as alumni, who are enrolled in high school and college. The purpose of HYC's YAC is to enlist the lived expertise of the students we serve in evaluating and providing feedback on HYC's services. To date, the HYC YAC has provided valuable critique of the youth feedback surveys, *Plan For The Future* workbook, and processes related to how the YAC will operate. Members of HYC's YAC receive a stipend for their participation, as well as leadership experience and opportunities to represent HYC at community events. Current HYC YAC members have participated in a strengths assessment and self-inventory discussion around leadership skill building. We are excited to grow the membership of the YAC and learn how we can best support the youth we serve.



New Location

For the past 12 years, HYC has called the West Valley home—and it will always be home—especially as our Transitional Host Home is located in Goodyear. At the end of the school year, we began administrative operations from our newest location in Phoenix—Hatcher and 3rd Street.

HYC serves youth in more than 130 high schools across Maricopa County, covering more than 9,000 square miles. This new location will allow more centralized access for our youth, as well as for our staff to be able to provide resources and services more efficiently. In addition to office space, this new location also provides on-site residential units for unaccompanied youth needing emergency housing, as well as housing for some unaccompanied first-year college students. Watch for information about an open house in the new year.

Growth... Flagstaff

This past year, HYC added a new school district that expanded services beyond Maricopa County into Flagstaff. In August 2021, HYC began working with the Flagstaff Unified School District and Ponderosa High School. In addition to providing services including basic necessities, school supplies, class fees and access to medical support, the school liaisons and counseling staff were excited about our youth coach who met with the youth weekly. Flagstaff's service providers and community have welcomed HYC to provide services to youth experiencing homelessness that are not currently offered in the community. This first year in Flagstaff we assisted 35 youth. This upcoming year we will add a community engagement team member to work more closely with the community accessing resources for HYC youth.

THANK YOU

We want to thank our community partners, donors, volunteers, and staff for their continued support this past year. We humbly appreciate everyone's time, energy, and hard work to help make an impact on youth experiencing homelessness in our communities and provide opportunities for our youth to have a healthy and sustainable future.



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