

YOUTH HOMES NEWS

Youth Homes News is a newsletter for our donors and friends in the community.

ON THE RIGHT PATH

AFTERCARE FOR YOUNG ADULTS

“Grateful” and “foster care” are not words people generally think to use together. But for Naomi, this is how she describes her involvement with Youth Homes.

Naomi is an 18 year old freshman at Los Medanos College who recently received a scholarship from the Youth Homes Auxiliary. She is pursuing a degree in criminal justice and aspires to be a police officer. She is also the mother of Nicholas, an active 2-year-old boy who keeps her moving.

“I’m grateful I was put into Andersen House,” Naomi shares about the all-girls group home in Concord. “It was hard at first, but I don’t think I would have graduated from high school otherwise. Who knows what would have happened to me!”

At 4 years old, after losing their parents in a car accident, Naomi and her three siblings moved in with their grandparents. As Naomi grew up, she became rebellious, involved in drugs and frequently ran away. Becoming too much for her grandparents to manage, at 14 years old, Naomi was placed at Andersen House.

“I missed being home, but then I got to know the other girls and we all got along.” Having structure and being motivated by the residents and staff, Naomi started to attend school daily and excel in her academics.

Naomi is now part of Youth Homes Aftercare, a program for youth transitioning out of foster care. She meets regularly with her clinician to work on making intentional choices

and on her communication skills. She also receives case management support such as budgeting and career planning.

Naomi is a reminder of how young adults can turn their life around when given the support to heal. Thank you for supporting Youth Homes and helping transform lives.

For more success stories, please visit our website at www.youthhomes.org



“I wish my parents were here to see me and Nicholas. I have great support — *we are lucky.*”



DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Youth Homes has strived to be a “community of practice” for a very long time. When we were nationally accredited by COA, their site review team was particularly complimentary of our **training program** because it is **fully integrated into every aspect of our service delivery system.**

Years of experience have taught us that we must meet kids “where they are.” This almost always means they come from extreme poverty where there is often a self-reinforcing absence of positive role models, few networking opportunities and work and vocational skills are rarely emphasized. Compound these issues with a childhood replete with multiple traumatic experiences and our responsibility to write and execute an insightful treatment plan for each individual teenager, is very challenging. **Yet, we successfully create and amend these treatment plans every day.**

The transition to adulthood is daunting even for kids who came from healthy and loving families. Our training assures that we provide culturally sensitive care to teens with widely differing levels of the ability to be self-directed.

We measure success by evaluating the **commitment of each young person to make repeated decisions that will sustain new and positive behavior.** We strive to create what Gary Zukav calls a “co-creative adventure” with each young person and their families, leading to productive and healthy young adulthood.

We are able to accomplish this work because we have such amazing support from our community of volunteers, county partners and private donors. **You make it all possible. Thank you!**

Sincerely,

Stuart McCullough
CEO

STEPPING STONES: A new workforce development initiative helps former foster youth find employment

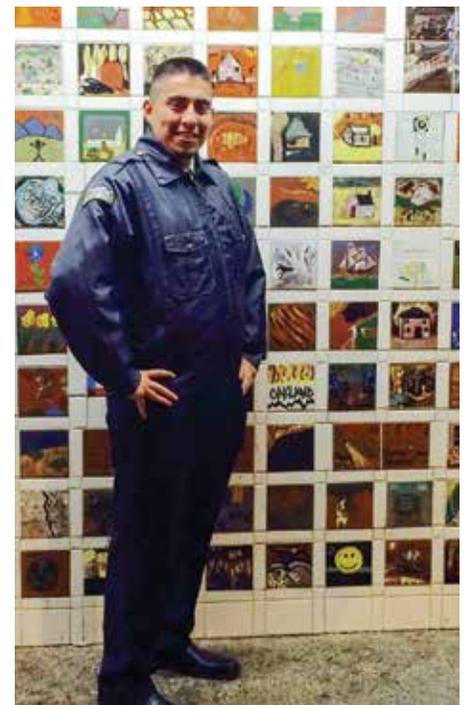
In December 2015, Youth Homes expanded its Workforce Development Program by launching the Stepping Stones Initiative. As a result of seed money from the generosity of philanthropic friends, Youth Homes created a Resource Center and a wage subsidy program to increase the opportunities for employment for foster youth.

When it opens later this year, the Resource Center will be a space that fosters a sense of community while providing an array of resources for our transition-age youth including job related activities and life skills training. It will be a place to come to receive support — both emotional and task-oriented — as they pursue employment opportunities. Youth

can use the computers and attend workshops led by volunteers on topics such as managing a bank account, how to use the public library, and healthy eating and cooking.

To increase opportunities for foster youth and reduce the financial risk to employers, Youth Homes subsidizes the hourly minimum wage by 50% for the first six months of the young adult's employment. In addition, both the young adult and the employer receive hands-on support during this period of time. The goal is for the employer to have a well-trained, dedicated employee after 6 months who will now continue on their payroll.

Stepping Stones is an innovative program for emancipated foster youth. It provides transition age youth with support, resources and additional cheerleaders to help get them on a path toward success.



Working as a security guard for a year, an Aftercare alumnus proudly shows off his uniform.

On behalf of our transition age youth, thank you to the following seed funders of this initiative: Youth Homes Auxiliary, Morris Stulsaft Foundation, Gemmer Foundation, and Ken and Donna Coit

HELPING HANDS



Left to right: Chris Chapple, Elizabeth Chapple, Robin Hayes, Maggie Gordon

Member of the Board of Directors, Elizabeth Chapple, and her husband Chris, hosted Youth Homes **1st Annual Hops for Hope**. With the help of committee members Robin Hayes and Maggie Gordon, they planned a fun-filled evening of beer tasting, live music, and a silent auction raising over \$11,000 for our Aftercare program for transition age youth as they launch into adulthood.

Youth Homes was one of four recipients to receive a vehicle as part of **Mike's Auto Body Benevolence Program**. This "community give back" program's mission is to present cars to deserving individuals or organizations during the holiday season. Youth Homes received a 2008 Ford Escape HEV, donated by Farmers Insurance Group and refurbished by the crew at Mike's Auto Body's Brentwood location.

The vehicle was filled with toys, food and other essentials for our kids.

Rain could not stop the golfers from playing 18 holes at the **Spectrum Wealth Partners golf tournament** which raised over \$4,900 to support Youth Homes' programs. Members of the Alamo Women's Club volunteered to help make the day a success.

The Barney and Barney Foundation presented a check to Youth Homes for \$25,000 at the annual **Barney & Barney Rock the Foundation** event in San Diego. The evening was filled with inspirational stories of California organizations making an impact in their respective communities.



Left to right: Hal Dunning, President, Barney & Barney/MMA West; Ryan Spink, Barney & Barney/MMA West; Beth Goldberg, Youth Homes; Shaina Van Pelt, Youth Homes; Jennifer Christensen, Barney & Barney/MMA West

AUXILIARY NEWS

It is an exciting time for the Auxiliary! We are working on new projects and revitalizing old ones, all while keeping our focus on how best to fulfill the needs of the Agency's youth.

The mission of the Auxiliary is clear: to provide necessary items and special extracurricular services that would

not otherwise be supplied by other sources of funding. The Auxiliary is continuing in its long tradition of making a difference in the lives of these young people.

- **House Liaison Project:** two Auxiliary members and a long serving volunteer are assigned to each residence to deliver birthday cakes and gift cards. They also maintain on-going contact with each residential supervisor to better relay the unmet needs of the residents.
- **Welcome Kit:** each kit includes a new backpack, a set of towels and a \$50 gift card for clothing purchases.
- **Thrift Shop:** open Monday-Saturday and staffed solely by volunteers, the Shop has contributed over \$70,000 this year to fund the Auxiliary's programs and initiatives!

LIVING LEGENDS

Become a Living Legend by including Youth Homes in your will and estate plans. Planned gifts are designated to the Youth Homes' Endowment to ensure a long life for Youth Homes.

Members of Living Legends

Anonymous (4)
 Richard Bittner
 Kathy and Rick Bowles
 Peggy and Keith Fleming
 Edith Henchey
 Corinne Marks
 Lorna Martyn
 Barbara and Stuart McCullough
 Leslie and Gary Miller
 Valerie and Paul Ridgers
 Ivy Robinson
 Joanne Taylor
 Catherine (Tat) Welcome



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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

For more information about the events below, please contact give@youthhomes.org or 925-949-5489.

MAY 3: EAST BAY GIVES

- A 24-hour day of giving to benefit local non-profits in Contra Costa and Alameda County. Visit: <https://eastbaygives.org/> to support Youth Homes!

MAY 21: COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE

- 10:30am-12:00pm
- Join us for a tour and meet staff at our Lafayette residential home for youth.
- RSVP required.

JUNE 11: TEXAS HOLD 'EM POKER FUNDRAISER

- Back Forty Texas BBQ, Pleasant Hill
- 5:30 pm registration and dinner; 6:30 pm cards fly
- \$65 buy-in includes poker chips and dinner. Prizes based on the number of players!
- Purchase tickets at www.youthhomes.org

SEPTEMBER 17: 2ND ANNUAL HOPS FOR HOPE FUNDRAISER

- Live, outdoor music, beer tasting and fun to support our Aftercare program for transition age youth launching into adulthood.

OCTOBER 15: 8TH ANNUAL HEARTS FOR HOPE FUNDRAISER at Boundary Oak Golf Course, Walnut Creek

- This year's Latin Nights themed event is sure to be colorful and fun! Enjoy an inspirational evening in support of foster youth in Contra Costa County.

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