Winter Newsletter 2022

Youth Empowerment Shelter

Your Support Makes a Difference

We want to say thank you to each person who has helped us do the incredible work of supporting young people in crisis this year. It is because of you that we have been able to walk alongside some of our community's most vulnerable and guide them.

We have had a full house here at Y.E.S. in recent months, a testament to the immense need for services and the good work that can be done because of your generosity.

"I'm scared and terrified." Roberta said when asked about her future. "I'm nervous, but I'm trying not to let that overpower me." Roberta came to stay at Y.E.S. this year after things had gotten so difficult at home that she was sleeping outside. Years of trauma had led to conflict that could not be resolved if she stayed. "It's a good place to be," she says of the house. "You respect my boundaries, but make sure that I'm moving forward and making progress."

At 17, Roberta would be facing homelessness if it were not for you. Your donations give her a chance to take a different path. She starts her first job this week and we want her to see that despite where she has been, she can have hope in her future. Thank you for giving Roberta hope.

Livia Christensen
Executive Director

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT SHELTER
Serving the youth of North Central Oregon

Youth Voices

"I'm so thankful to be here."

—

"Before coming to Y.E.S. I was having a hard time. Now I have goals and can imagine my future."

—

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You Changed Jimmy's Life

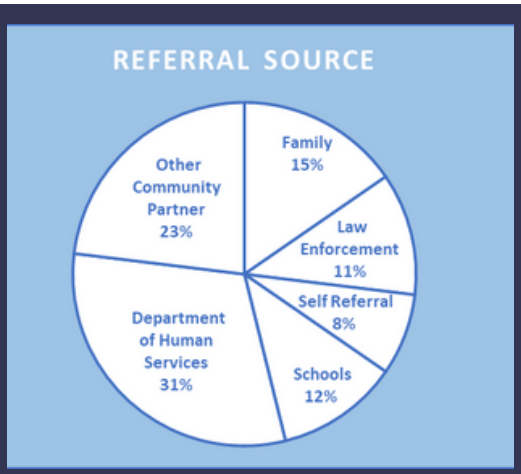
Tension in Jimmy's home brought him to the shelter this year. He had been out of school since the start of COVID. His father struggled to parent a teen while dealing with unemployment and health issues. Jimmy became depressed and felt hopeless. He says, "I was in a bad place. Everything I tried didn't work and I had no one to help me. I spent a lot of time in my room playing video games and tried not to think of the future." When Jimmy first came to Y.E.S., as part of a family safety plan, he did not want to be here. He also knew he had no other options. Eventually, he started sharing his goals and hopes with staff. With just a little encouragement Jimmy started to turn his life around. He got a job, enrolled in GED classes, and has plans to get his driver's license. He's funny, smart and thoughtful. Most importantly he has the hope and confidence to imagine a better future. Your donations help Jimmy and other youth like him.

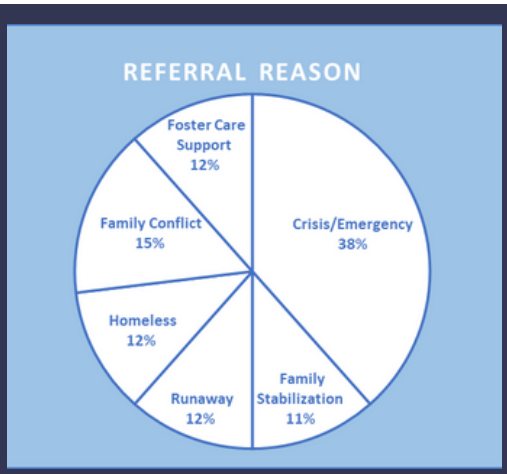
Together We Can Keep Kids Safe

One of the biggest challenges we faced this year was staffing. As a 24/7/365 shelter, we can't operate if we don't have enough of the right people. Thank you to our volunteers and amazing team. We know not everyone can volunteer, but your donations helped us to onboard new employees and provide critical trainings for staff like Karrie who keep the house running around the clock.

So Far This Year You...

- Provided 604 nights of shelter
- Responded to over 50 referrals and outreach contacts
- Helped a total of 26 youth stay at the shelter
- Supported and average length of stay of 23 days
- Helped youth find jobs, stay in school, learn about healthy relationships, develop life skills, and connect with their community





A common question we get is "How do youth get referred to Y.E.S.? As a small organization we depend on our community partnerships to connect with youth in need.

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A Story of Transformation

By Toni Virgil, Board Vice President

I **remember the day that I was approached about getting involved at the shelter.** I prayed about it and felt the Lord answer, just as he had on my own journey of recovery and healing.

My story is one of transformation. I was born and raised into a drug addicted home. People were in and out day and night. Life was wild and one of the few places I felt safe was at the hospital where I received treatment for severe asthma from a young age.

I am a survivor of physical and sexual abuse and community violence. In a town where there were gangs, I had to learn to fight to survive there too. At school, girls would pull my hair so bad that I had to run my head under cold water to stop the stinging. Early on, I turned to the drugs I was exposed to. I did not like the way they made me feel but they took away some of the pain and countered some of the side effects I felt from medical treatment. At 13, I was black out drinking and smoking. At 16 I quit school to sell drugs and at 19, I learned how to cook meth.

I got caught for the first time when I was driving through the gorge. It landed me on probation in The Dalles. I was in and out of jail and could not stay clean. I got pregnant and was finally set up to go to treatment but right before I left, my boyfriend demanded I hand my son over. I was young, had no support, and did not know my rights. I lost my son and my spot in treatment as it was only for mothers and children.

It was in 2006 that I had an encounter with God and my life changed. An amazing woman doing jail ministry sent me an application for The Freedom House when it was brand new. I was 1 of 3 women accepted. They helped me get sober and back in school. I got my GED and started doing college coursework. I was the President of Phi Theta Kappa, Valedictorian of my class, and spoke at graduation. With support, I put in the work and found a different path. Today I am married, a working mom of 5, own my own home, and grateful to serve on the Y.E.S. board.

When God brings us to the other side, it gives us the power to help others like me and like the kids at Y.E.S. to have a better and brighter path forward. **Please consider making an end of year donation or becoming a monthly donor today**, so that we can continue this amazing work.

Want to help more kids?

To make a donation, volunteer or learn more please visit:
www.yeshelter.org
Donations can also be mailed to
PO Box 107, The Dalles OR 97058