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YouthHope

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE STARTS WITH TODAY

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DECEMBER 1, 2012



Items Needed for Christmas:

- Blankets
- \$5 Gift Cards
- Mittens
- Hygiene Items
- Gift Bags
- Candy

These items will help make this Christmas even more special for the youth that YouthHope serves. Items can be dropped off at the First Presbyterian Church on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 3pm to 6pm. Please deliver items by December 17th.

Now is the time to donate much needed funds to YouthHope. As we head into the new year we expect to see many more youth needing services. Any amount will help! Send checks to:
YouthHope
P.O. Box 601
Redlands, CA 92373

Shoes for Christmas, Hope for a Lifetime

The community is already responding wonderfully to this special program! There is still time to participate and give a youth a very special Christmas gift. Every year YouthHope will ask the youth we serve to pick their favorite pair of Vans shoes. We then ask the community to purchase the youth's shoe requests which we present to the youth at a special Christmas party. When YouthHope presented the shoes to the youth and asked them to choose, one young person asked "we get to choose another pair of shoes this year?" This particular young person couldn't believe they would receive a new pair. She was still wearing the same pair she received at last year's Christmas party, but she had put duct tape around all the holes to keep any moisture out. This young girl had worn the shoes every single day since she re-

ceived them last Christmas, and she was beyond elated that she would once again receive a new pair this Christmas.

To participate in this special program you will first email or call Alana Mayer at alana@youthhope.org or (909) 693-0801 and she will send you a card with a youth's particular request on it. You will then need to take this card to the Vans store in Redlands located in the same complex as Vons. They will help you find your youth's shoe. Attach the shoe card to the box after your purchase and deliver the shoes unwrapped to YouthHope at the First Presbyterian Church in Redlands. We can accept shoe deliveries on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 3pm-6pm. Please deliver shoes by December 17th so that we can wrap all of the

shoes.

To make this Christmas even more special, YouthHope is asking for donations of blankets, scarves, hats, and hygiene items. Any travel size deodorant, shampoo, conditioner, chapstick, or dental care products would be great hygiene items to donate. These donations can also be dropped off at YouthHope on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 3pm-6pm. The First Presbyterian Church is located at 100 Cajon Street in Redlands. In years past YouthHope has been fortunate enough to not only give each youth their dream shoe, but a bag of hygiene items, a new blanket, a scarf, and a hat. This is because the community made these gifts possible. We hope that this Christmas will be just as special as the last few Christmas' for the homeless and at-risk youth that we serve.

Medical Help is Much Needed

YouthHope believes that a youth are better able to achieve success when physical health is established. So many of the youth we serve have lacked crucial access to medical care. Youth badly in need of glasses have struggled in class, impacting their ability to learn. Other youth have suffered through tremendous pain as their teeth have undergone years of decay. However with the generous help of the community, service clubs, and a network of doctors, YouthHope has been able to connect youth

with medical treatment.

Throughout the month of November, two youth received eye exams and glasses. We wish that we could have caught the youth's reactions to their new glasses on film. They were beyond excited that they had glasses that were prescribed just for them, and that they could see. One youth explained that his new sight felt like a fresh drop of clarity had been laid across his eyes.

Due to the generosity of The Loma Linda University's Dental Students,



seven youth were seen for dental work this month. Once a month, Loma Linda dental students have given up their Sunday evenings in order to care for our youth. Through this program, we hope to provide over 30 youth with transformative dental care. We have already witnessed the effects this program as had on the youth; as embarrassment and pain fall away, a new sense of confidence brings light to their futures.

Providing Hope

Here is another story from the "Walk in Their Shoes" Fundraiser: I am a 24 year old youth on the streets of Redlands. You are probably asking yourself, "Why is he still on the streets? Why is he such a screw up?" Every day, I look at my life and ask myself those same questions. But I beg of you, before you write me off, listen to my story; walk in my shoes. We can start at the beginning: Upon giving birth to me, my mom was no longer just an addict, she was an addict with a child. But her new identity as a mother did not change her much. She continued to use drugs heavily. Between her rotations of consecutive highs and withdrawals, she would finally gather that I had gone without food all day. Half way through the week she would remember that I hadn't been to school in days. With an addiction as strong as hers, there was no way that she could possibly raise me. When I was 10 years old, my mother voluntarily gave up her rights as a parent, and sent me to live with my uncle. I thought that parents are supposed to fight for their children. A mother should do everything in her power to protect, shelter, and care for their kids. Maybe she truly believed that giving me up was the best thing that she could do. However, she was horribly misled. My uncle was incredibly abusive to me. He believed that violence was a necessary tool for parenting a young boy. He

didn't love me but he continued to keep me in his home because I was his so called "responsibility". For four years, he continually emotionally and physically abused me until one day Child Protective Services came in and removed me from the home. Upon taking me out of my uncle's home, CPS delivered me to my father. As I traveled back to my birthplace of Redlands, I let myself believe that I would finally be loved and accepted. But after CPS dropped me off, my father told me "Leave, I don't want you". At only 14 years old, I had been rejected by my mother, my uncle, and now my father. I had lived in three separate homes with three separate family members, all of whom had abandoned me. I had nowhere else to turn except the streets. I began sleeping on the streets of Redlands at 14 years old. When most youth are thinking about girls or joining the baseball team, I was fighting to survive. Within a few months of being homeless, I began using methamphetamine. As a homeless youth, it is incredibly hard to stay away from drugs. We want to forget the incredible hurt that has fallen upon us at the hands of our parents, our abusers, and our family members. But living on the street does not erase that pain, it only adds to it. After living on the streets for four years, I had been sexually abused, had developed a debilitating mental illness, been locked up for stealing, and was in the midst of fighting

a vicious addiction to meth. It has taken years of struggle, but I am finally creating a life worth living. When I turned 18, I knew that I needed to quit using meth, so I began my road to recovery. It was a long and painful journey, but after 4 years of meth use, I was able to get clean. Once I was able to commit to a life without drugs, I began working any job I could get my hands on. I worked as a yard landscaper, mowing lawns eight hours a day for \$40 a day. I am now working as a full time painter. Yet however hard I work, I still hold onto the loneliness and the memories of being abandoned time and time again. I continue to fight with crippling mental illness, because however hard I try, I cannot convince myself that I am worth loving. I have been told my whole life that I am worthless. In order to be truly successful in life, I must love myself. For now, I will continue attending YouthHope and investing in my relationships with my friends because it is the one place where I am told "You are worth fighting for, you are important, you are worth loving". Thank you for being here tonight to support YouthHope. Your contributions throughout the years have given me access to food, clothing, mental health services, and most importantly, hope.

As you have your Christmas celebrations, remember YouthHope with your recycling. We recycle glass bottles, plastic bottles, and cans for much needed funding. The funding then goes towards supporting YouthHope programs for homeless and at-risk youth.

Contact Us!
We would love to hear from you.
You can call us at (909)663-4543 or email us at info@youthhope.org

You can also find us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter!](#)



Note From the Founder

Each year I am reminded of what a blessing it is to live and work in such a wonderful community. Nothing could be accomplished for the homeless and at-risk youth without the support of the community. YouthHope has once again asked that the community show their care for the youth by purchasing youth new shoes for Christmas. The community has, once again, demonstrated care and compassion beyond what these youth could have ever imagined. With the Shoes for Christmas, Hope for a Lifetime Program now under way, you are getting out there and purchasing shoes and you are excited to give this gift to the youth. When we deliver the shoes and other items to the youth, I make it a point

to tell them that community members made these gifts possible because they care. When so many of the youth go through life thinking that they are unloved and uncared for, it is not easy for them to understand that strangers could care so much. It gives them the hope and strength to persevere when they know that there are people who believe in them.

Thank you to everyone who helped with the Thanksgiving meal. It was a huge success for those youth who came, many of whom wanted to be home with their families. Your help made this day feel special for youth who have a very difficult time with the holiday either because they have no family or because they are not allowed to be with their family. One young

man stated that he desperately wanted to go home for Thanksgiving but his family would not allow it. We know that his family has to be firm in their decision because of the hurt their son had caused them, but this youth was struggling to accept why he could not go home. By having a place like the Presbyterian Church open to these youth on Thanksgiving, they do not feel alone and they feel loved. So again I thank you for your willingness to make the holiday a little brighter for youth who are hurting. Thank you for making food, and serving, and spending time with the youth on Thanksgiving. I hope all of you have a wonderful Christmas, and a blessed new year! Heidi Mayer— Executive Director