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YouthHope



HOPE FOR THE FUTURE STARTS WITH TODAY

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 4

JANUARY 1, 2012

**Recycle for a
Cause! Donate
Your Recycling to
YouthHope**



Something as simple as donating your plastic, glass, and aluminum recycling can help feed homeless and at risk youth in your community. If you are interested in supporting us through our recycling program we will personally pick up your recycled items each Friday! For more information contact us at (909)435-6945 or rachel@youthhope.org.

Christmas Shoes all wrapped up!



Grants Help to Increase Effectiveness

In the month of December YouthHope was awarded three grants from major companies who do business in the area. One grant was given to us by the Collective Brands Foundation which is the company that runs Payless Shoe Source. The grant will go towards the YouthHope Youth Care Program and the Youth Training and Education Program. The Youth Care program was created to help take care of homeless and at-risk youth's medical and general well being. It involves scheduling medical appointments and providing transportation and representation to the appointments. Often times the homeless and at-risk youth we serve have medical issues that are preventing them from carrying out their goals and exiting street life. When YouthHope can step in to

help youth maintain a healthy lifestyle we are offering them the support they need to achieve their goals.

The Youth Training and Education Program was created because YouthHope feels it is pertinent to a youth's success to obtain some sort of education. YouthHope will take youth to appointments and offer tutoring to those enrolled in programs.

Another grant was given to YouthHope by the In-N-Out Foundation. This grant will go towards the cost of our Food Distribution Program. This program involves supplying three hot meals a week, supplying groceries, supplying food gift cards, and supplying snack packs. This program is essential to the health

of the youth we serve as the majority of them would not have the means to get food without it.

The last grant was from Edison International for the cost of hiring a fundraising coordinator. Because YouthHope is a non-profit organization funds received go towards services that directly serve the youth. We must raise enough funds to pay staff and continue fundraising efforts. Having the ability to hire a fundraising coordinator will enable YouthHope to accomplish successful fundraisers and continue to help the homeless and at-risk youth.

YouthHope would like to thank all three of these companies for investing in our future and for investing in the future of the homeless and at-risk youth we serve.

Christmas Shoes Give Hope

The YouthHope Shoes for Christmas, Hope for a Lifetime was an enormous success. We had 180 youth ask for shoes and because you, the community, either purchased or donated funds for shoes we were able to obtain 180 pairs of new Vans shoes. These new shoes are vital to the youth for several different reasons. The first reason being that the majority of these youth are either homeless or at high risk of becoming homeless. They walk countless miles because they do not have transportation to school and work. Their shoes are then worn to the threads and they are unable to purchase a new pair of shoes. The youth then end up with diseases in their feet because they do not have clean shoes and socks. By receiving a new pair of shoes they are able to continue attending school and work and they do not have to worry about contracting a foot disease,

Not only are the Christmas shoes vital to the physical health of the youth, they are vital to their mental health. Many of these youth do not have the luxury of receiving Christmas presents. Some have never even received a Christmas present in their lifetime. To be able to receive a present that they asked for was a dream come true. When they opened their shoes and realized they received the exact shoe they asked for the excitement was indescribable. Many of them put their shoes on immediately and began dancing in them. Not only did the community so graciously purchase shoes and donate money, but you gave homemade blankets, hats, mittens and scarves. You gave socks and bags and toiletries. You also made delicious holiday food including turkey, potatoes, bread, cookies, and pies. All of the youth received these items and were grateful that members of the community cared for them to give such wonderful Christmas presents. We would like each community

member who donated anything towards this special Christmas event to know that we are eternally grateful for you. YouthHope would like to make sure we thank all of you who donated shoes, funds, blankets, scarves, mittens, hats, toiletries, food, gift bags, and time serving. We are asking that if you participated in this event to please send us your name and address. If you would like a tax receipt for your donation of shoes please send us the youth's name you purchased shoes for and the amount spent on the shoes. If you would like a tax receipt for any other item donated please indicate what items you donated and if possible the amount spent on those items.

This event could not have happened without the support of you, the community. Thank you for showing these youth that people do care for them and for making this Christmas a special one.

Will I Be Home For Christmas?

Christmas is a time of family and friends and presents and warmth from the fire. For the youth we serve it can be a depressing time as they are on the streets with nowhere to go. That is why YouthHope started the Shoes for Christmas, Hope for a Lifetime program where each youth is given their dream shoe for Christmas. The program continues to be a great success and the youth are given hope that there is a community who cares for them. This is the greatest gift that comes from the program, the gift of care. Many of the youth want to know that there are people who care for them and love them and who support them.

Before the Christmas party the youth expressed their deep sadness over the holiday season. There were several youth who were contemplating suicide because they could not bear to spend the holiday without their families.

Tom, who we spoke of in the December 1st entry on Stories From YouthHope, remains clean from heroin. He faced his fear of going to jail and went to court for a traffic ticket that he needed cleared from his record. Tom did not have to go to jail and he walked out of court with a clean record. This meant that he could now apply for jobs and try to get on his feet. These accomplishments were not enough for Tom though. He wanted his family to see that he was trying to turn his life around and he wanted to go home for Christmas.

Another young man that we are just getting to know expressed his desire to be home with family. This young man, "Johnny", was a star athlete in high school but his world started

crumbling when his parents divorced. He no longer competed athletically and he could not get along with his new step mother. His mother then became ill with cancer which broke Johnny's spirit completely. His mother had been a well-known dietician when she was diagnosed and she lost everything trying to survive the cancer. Johnny felt it was best to get out of the way so his mother could heal and so he wouldn't be a burden to his father. All he wanted was for his family to be together again and for his mother to be better. He did not want to think of what Christmas would be like on the streets.

"Shawn" was also beginning to feel a deep depression over the holiday. He had been sent to Redlands for a rehabilitation program but he wanted to go home for Christmas. Shawn grew up in Florida with his adoptive parents who loved him dearly. They felt the rehab program in the Redlands area was the best thing for him but Shawn just felt he was abandoned by his family. He worked hard in the program and felt he deserved the opportunity to go home. Shawn had even made contact with his birth mother who lived on the East Coast and he thought there was no better time for a visit than at Christmas. He did not think a visit was possible because of the limitations of the program and he spent many nights contemplating ending it all.

Everything changed for these young men on Christmas because they were given a very special gift. Tom's grandmother came into town and saw that he had been working diligently to overcome his demons. She filled Tom's mother in on the progress and Tom was allowed to come home to spend

Christmas with his family. Johnny had been attending YouthHope meals just trying to survive the chaos that his life had become. He did not know that his mother had listed him on the missing person's list. Somehow she found out about YouthHope and made a call to Heidi where we confirmed that her son was with us. Johnny's mother made sure that he was home with her for Christmas. Shawn had the idea to call his adoptive parents and ask if he could go visit his birth mother for Christmas. He explained that he had been working hard in the rehab program and that he did not want to spend Christmas away from family. His parents agreed and they sent him to the East Coast to spend the holiday with his mother.

These young men had all been living on the edge, debating about ending their lives because they could not bear to be alone. They felt unloved and just wanted a second chance. Their families gave them that second chance and they were all given the gift of supportive families this Christmas. They will now be able to go after their goals with a new found confidence because they know that if they work hard their families will be there to support them. It is not often that we get to see parents taking an active role in the lives of the kids we work with. When we do get the opportunity to see it, it is as if their love for their children could move mountains. Thank you to all of those who made Christmas special for those youth who do not have the gift of supportive families. Your help with our Christmas Shoes program demonstrated to the youth that people do care.



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



Note from the Founder

At the start of each new year I like to take a moment and reflect on the past year. It reminds me that YouthHope is continuing to grow and help homeless and at-risk youth. Sometimes it is hard for me to see just how many youth the organization is helping but when I pause for reflection I realize we have helped over 200 youth in a year. We have 54 youth in job training and education programs. We have handed out 87 bus passes so our youth can attend their programs. We have also driv-

en 100's of miles each month taking youth to medical appointments, job interviews, and education program interviews. I am also aware that this was accomplished because of the many people who have supported us throughout the year. YouthHope would not be able to serve warm meals three times a week without dedicated volunteers who organize, cook, and serve. We would also not be able to pay for school fees, medical fees, or food without those of you who have financially supported us. I am

constantly encouraging the youth to look towards their future and create a plan for their lives. I think it will also be beneficial for them to take a moment of reflection to see that many of them have overcome major obstacles. They will see that they are more knowledgeable, more confident, and on their way to becoming self sufficient adults. I send my deepest gratitude to all who have supported YouthHope and I wish you the happiest of new years!
-Heidi Mayer, Executive Director