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THE YOUTH HOPE POST

A Community that Gives

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DROP—IN CENTER TIMES:

MON: 3 PM—6 PM

WED: 3 PM—6 PM

THUR: 3 PM—6 PM

Words cannot fully illustrate the thrill and excitement seen across our youths' faces when they received a gift for Christmas.

On December 22nd, 2014 YouthHope hosted its 5th annual Youth Christmas Party, in which every youth receives a personal Christmas gift of a brand new pair of shoes! This is a very difficult time of the year for many of our youth as the importance of "family" and "togetherness" are emphasized everywhere you go; both of which are luxuries our youth have learned to live without. They come from broken families and homes with little to no love or care for one another. They find more safety and nurturing on the streets than they do at home; and during this time of the year they are reminded of that solemn truth.

As several of our youth approached the Shoe Distribution Booth at the Christmas party we

noticed their worn shoes were the same pair we had given them a year ago. One of our youth caught us looking at their shoes and proudly shared with us how he made them last the entire year! As our youth walk miles day-in and day-out, it is not only a huge treat for them to have a new pair of shoes, but it is one they will treasure and care for throughout the year.

One of our volunteers who helped distribute the shoes, shared with us "what a privilege it was to see how they responded to receiving their gift." One young man held his wrapped box and stared at it, taking the time to gather his excitement before saying "my own wrapped present...And it has my name on it!"

He was ecstatic to receive a gift that was all his own!

Another young man clutched his box and hugged it tight upon receiving his gift.

These moments remind us of

how important this gift really is to these youth.

We would like to thank each and everyone of you who contributed to making this Christmas so special for our youth! From the little ones who held sock drives, to the elderly who knitted beanies and scarves for our youth, the entire community, young and old, came together in supporting YouthHope this Christmas. It is a true honor and privilege to live in a community that is so willing and eager to serve. Folks gave donations that ranged from Christmas paper goods to help make the party festive, to boxes of brand new socks and shoes. To say THANK YOU is an understatement in expressing our gratitude to ALL that helped support YouthHope this Christmas! Your giving hearts are evident in this community.

Meet the Staff

Throughout the next few months we will be featuring stories of our staff and volunteers in this column. Last year, 2014, YouthHope downsized to 2 paid staff members. This has made a very stark impact on all that we do and accomplish at YouthHope. It is important to note that Youth-

Hope continues to grow and meet the many needs of our youth with just 2 staff members and dozens of volunteers.

In our gratitude to you all, our generous supporters and donors, we would like you to meet these wonderful individuals who are the hands and feet

of our cause in moving our at-risk youth forward and caring for their needs. Your donations make YouthHope possible, and we would like you to meet the hard-working staff and volunteers that make your donation go the farthest.

YouthHope's 4th Annual Benefit Dinner



YouthHope is excited to invite you to attend our 4th Annual Walk in Their Shoes Benefit Dinner and Evening of Awareness titled "A Walk in Their Shoes." The evening will open with an hour of awareness taking place at 6'o'clock in the evening on Friday February 27th, 2015 followed by a 3-course dinner

and program at 7. Ticket reservations are \$75 per seat or \$500 for a table which seats 8.

This fundraiser is unique to YouthHope in that we give our attendees a look into the lives of our youth.

As we guide you through their various experiences and lifestyles, we hope to display the emotions and struggles our youth face while living under at-risk, underprivileged and homeless conditions.

The event will be held in the Summerbell Room in the Mitten Building in Redlands, located at 345 N. 5th Street. Tickets can be pur-

chased online at www.youthhope.org/awalkintheirshoes or via email at Cherise@youthhope.org or mail: P.O. Box 7803, Redlands, CA 92375.

PLEASE PLACE YOUR RESERVATION BY FEBRUARY 13TH. Please note seats are limited. Reservation is not complete without payment.

To inquire regarding sponsoring this event or reserving a seat or table please contact Cherise at (909) 810—3848 or via email at Cherise@youthhope.org.

Building Updates

CONTACT US:

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Our YouthHope Drop-In Center is coming along very well, thanks to many MANY serving hearts! The plumbing and electrical needs have been completed, and the building recently passed inspection to continue to the next step of installing insulation in the walls. We held a workday a few weeks ago, in which 14 youth and community members came together to

help install the insulation.

Loma Linda University's Construction Crew has come onboard this year to donate their time and various trades in helping with the construction of the building. With their help, alongside dozens of local businesses, service clubs, and individuals, YouthHope expects the Drop-In Center to be finished within the 2015 year!

We are currently in need of funds for some building items, such as toilets, sinks, and kitchen equipment, but we are thrilled to see the building progress much quicker with the help of LLU's construction crew. Thank you to everyone for helping with the building campaign and working to meet the needs of this construction venture.

Note from the Founder



Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! I am overwhelmed with gratitude towards all our wonderful donors, volunteers, and overall giving community that has helped YouthHope throughout the year!

The issue of youth-homelessness has sadly increased in the last year. Our former numbers from the Redlands Unified School District showed 1400 homeless

youth in this district alone. This year it increased to 1600.

Our daily number of youth we feed and care for has increased to an average of 50—60 youth every evening; and the amount of bus passes we distribute has grown as well.

Though this population has grown, our successes have grown as well. 30 of our youth are currently employed among Redlands and San Bernardino businesses, 10 are enrolled in local

colleges, 25 are excited to graduate high school in the coming year, and innumerable more are continuing their studies to finish school and keep moving forward. We are proud of our youth and their ongoing accomplishments and are excited for the impact this community will continue to make in the new year!

Happy New Years! - Heidi Mayer