

February 1, 2015

Volume 12, Issue 2



THE YOUTH HOPE POST

“A WALK IN THEIR SHOES”

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Our 4th Annual Benefit Dinner is coming up and we hope you can join us and be a part of this very special evening!

“A Walk in Their Shoes” Benefit Dinner & Evening of Awareness began in 2010 and became an annual fundraiser for YouthHope.

In November of 2013, YouthHope was blessed with a building to meet our needs of a future Drop-In Center! YouthHope then hosted an Open House Night and invited the community of Redlands to see the building, hear our vision for it, and ask them to be a part of its construction and development.

Not wanting to overwhelm our diligent followers and donors with two very like events, we decided to focus on the construction of the building and other fundraisers in 2014 and not repeat this event for that year.

We are excited to bring this fundraiser back this year and invite you all to be a part of this very special

and touching evening! This year we will have a couple of our youth join us and share a little during the program.

The evening opens with an hour of awareness in which you will be able to browse national, statewide, and county statistics and experience realities our homeless and at-risk youth face.



Part of this fundraiser includes an opportunity drawing in which you could purchase drawing tickets to win a weekend stay at a Big Bear private cabin! There is also a 1 hour private Flight Time with a Redlands pilot, a Photography session, and many many other incredible drawing opportunities!

Reservations are available at \$75 a seat or \$500 for a table which seats

8. The event will begin at 6'o'clock in the evening on Friday, February 27th, 2015 at the Mitten Building in Redlands, located at 345 North 5th Street, Redlands, CA 92374. The dinner will include a 3-course meal, and vegan and vegetarian options will be available upon RSVP request. Please RSVP by February 13th.

To reserve your seat, please mail check to YouthHope at P.O. Box 7803, Redlands, CA 92375 noting “Walk in Their Shoes” in memo line.

Seats may also be purchased online at www.youthhope.org/awalkintheirshoes

For questions regarding the event please contact Cherise at (909) 810 - 3848 or via email at Cherise@youthhope.org

We hope you can join us as we take you through the footsteps of our youths’ journeys and illustrate just what it looks like to walk in their shoes.

Meet Lorrie

Lorrie Hinkleman began volunteering with YouthHope in 2013. She spends over 20 hours every week helping to write grants, gather research on youth homelessness, and even manages our GED and tutoring program. In addition, Lorrie also serves on YouthHope’s Board of Directors and helps to keep YouthHope connected with various service partners in our county. When asked what

drives her desire to volunteer with YouthHope, she responded, “I really truly believe in the mission. I’ve been a teacher all my life and at the heart of YouthHope’s mission is education. I LOVE that about it and I love that I get to be a part of it.”

YouthHope is incredibly blessed to have the amazing volunteers that we do, Lorrie being one such volunteer who

truly gives so much of herself to help YouthHope.

“My favorite part is the variety of what I do at YouthHope and also definitely the teaching part. There’s nothing like the feeling of working with a youth and seeing them GET IT. I mean even if you only helped one youth—you helped that ONE youth!”

Thank you Lorrie for all that you do! You’re amazing.

Life on the Streets

Though most of our youth do a very good job at hiding their homelessness, none had done so well as our dear youth Zander.

Zander found YouthHope nearly 3 months ago. He would come early, wait for YouthHope volunteers to arrive, and would help set up for our hot meal times. He is very sweet and considerate of others, and is always willing to give a helping hand. You would never think he has experienced the things he has in his young life.

Recently, Zander opened up and trusted us enough to share his story. What he shared was nothing short of tragic.

Zander had grown up between Beaumont, Yucaipa, Redlands, and a small town in the state of Minnesota. His mother was a drug-addict and had lost 3 of his half-siblings to Child Protective Services. Zander was raised by his father for most of his life—until he was 13 years old. His father was very physically abusive with Zander, and at 13 Zander ran away and left to live with his mother again. His mother and her boyfriend then introduced young Zander to the effects of Methamphetamine. Zander also became addicted and would help his mother deal on the streets. For 2 years, they lived on the streets, sleeping under bushes and freeways. Zander, only 13 years of age, had already experienced the worst

ends of life. From being physically, sexually, and verbally abused in his early childhood, to living under a bush, to being introduced to meth at the age of 13...Zander had seen and done it all.

Zander's mother decided it was time she moved her life forward and attend rehab. With his mother in rehab, Zander went to couch surfing with friends and living on the streets alone. Throughout this time Zander got into trouble with the police and was put in juvenile hall for 2 weeks. When Zander was released he continued to couch-surf until his mother found him. At this point, she was working hard to remain sober and began working at a fast food restaurant nearby - this was the first job she had ever had.

Together, Zander and his mother began working to move forward and be rid of the habits and tragedies of their past.

Zander's experiences are such that you would never expect him to have lived through this when meeting him. He is quiet, silly, caring, and inclusive of everyone he meets. It is difficult to imagine the pains our youth face when they recall a memory of their past. Some such memories are inevitable and cannot be hidden for too long before they resurface and need to be dealt with. The abuse of Zander's past

has yet to be dealt with, but he knows that he has us to help him along the way when he is ready. Many of our youth carry this burden of their past, this self-consciousness of their lifestyles passed on to them by their parents. It is one of the most challenging things for our youth to share this past and these experiences with others—especially adults. Many of the adult-figures in their lives have bailed and abandoned them; or told them to “do better,” not realizing those words really sound like “you’re not good enough” to a youth’s ears. It takes a great deal of time and care for our youth to begin to trust our volunteers with their stories, but when they do, they realize that they are cared for and valued for who they are, with us.

DID YOU KNOW?

California has twice the rate of homeless students than the national average.

(learn more about youth homelessness in our area at our upcoming benefit dinner)

Note from the Founder



January turned out to be a slow and steady month of catching up from the holiday season. At YouthHope our purpose is always our youth, and as I give my attention to the various other needs of YouthHope: advancing our YouthCare Programs, the construction of the building, our upcoming fundraiser, etc. I have to take a moment, sit back, and remind myself of what this is all for...the youth. We do this be-

cause we love our youth and we want to see them succeed. We encourage them to move forward and we give them the tools to do so. I LOVE spending time with these kids and they are 100% the reason YouthHope exists.

As this year brings new excitements and new opportunities, I want to always have in mind the youth that we serve; where they are coming from, what they have experienced,

and the importance of feeling loved and cared for as a first priority.

I hope you all can join us for our upcoming “A Walk in Their Shoes,” as I’m certain it will be an evening you won’t want to miss!

Thank you all for your support and for aiding our cause in helping our at-risk, homeless and runaway youth! - Heidi Mayer