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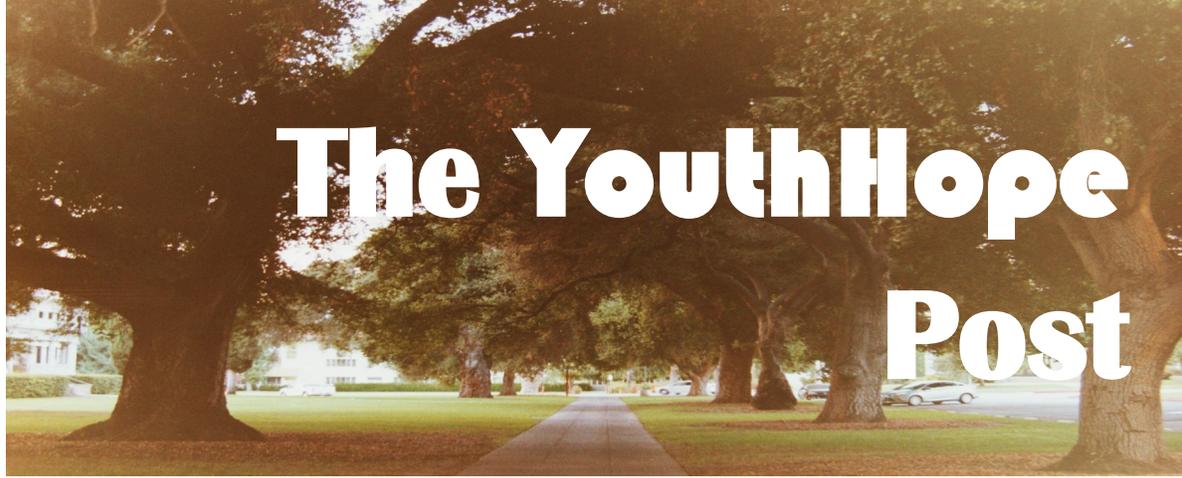
- Rita Shaw Broker and Associates



- Weingart Foundation



- Ann Whitlock



## Heidi Mayer named Woman of the Year, Woman of Distinction, and Hero

In the last year, YouthHope's Executive Director, Heidi Mayer, has received several awards from different community leaders. In June, she received The Hero of Redlands Award from Mayor Paul Foster. In October, she received Woman of Distinction from Senator Mike Morrell, and in March, she received Woman of the Year for the 40th District from Assemblyman Marc Steinorth.

We are so thankful for Mayor

Foster, Senator Morrell, and Assemblyman Steinorth. Heidi believes that receiving these awards are great ways for people to learn about homelessness and the problem that our state and country have. She says "Together we can change the statistics. We can end homelessness. With the help of our government and our community, we can make a difference".

It is such an honor for Heidi to receive these awards. Just 7

years ago, Heidi was serving peanut butter and jelly sandwiches out of the back of her car and now we have a full functioning drop in center where our youth come for a safe place to eat and be loved. We would not be where we are without this support and the support of our generous donors who continually support YouthHope.

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.



## Meet Robert

Robert Cole is our volunteer supervisor and coordinator for all of YouthHope's building construction. He dedicates every Saturday and some Sundays to come work at YouthHope. He is in charge of supervising our volunteers who come and help and he also coordinates construction efforts, provides tools, and oversees everything that is being done to the building.

Without his dedication and support, we would still be

serving our youth in the parking lot.

Robert learned of YouthHope when Heidi came and spoke at the Redlands Academy. Once he learned about YouthHope he gathered all of his resources to help.

Robert is very thankful for the support that he receives from numerous businesses and wants to make sure that these people get recognized for their donations and time given. We have made a special page on YouthHope's website to view

these volunteers. Head over to [www.youthhope.org](http://www.youthhope.org) and click on the "Give Where You Live" tab and see how many people have helped to make this possible.

When Robert isn't at YouthHope, he is working as the Project Manager at Loma Linda University Health or he's at the golf course enjoying a round of golf. Thank you so much Robert for your help and dedication. We are so thankful for you!

## Finding Trust

I don't trust anyone.....anyone. If you knew my story, you wouldn't blame me. I've had to fend for myself my whole life. I mean, I wasn't born to a loving mother and father. I was born to be used as a tax credit. Tax babies....that's what we're called. My brothers and sisters were used for the same thing and now my sisters are making tax babies. My brothers are alcoholics and my dad's been in prison the majority of my life for being a child molester.

I never felt love or trust and at a young age I wanted to die. I never had a reason to live. By the age of 5 I was involved in gangs. I stayed with them hoping to get shot by police or at a drug deal gone wrong. I just didn't want to have to endure the pain of being unloved. Unwanted.

One night I was so angry. I had gotten into a fight with my mom and uncle. I was done with this family and with my life. I was done feeling hurt. Feeling lonely. Feeling like I couldn't trust anyone. So I did the only thing I could think of. I burnt our house down. I was 9 years old.

I went to juvenile hall. I was kept there until I was 18. Then they moved me to a high security prison until I was 22. I saw things in prison that no one should have to see. I still have nightmares about the time that I was in there.

There was some good that came from being in prison all of those years. I don't do

drugs. I don't drink alcohol. I don't have any children that I have to support. I'm clean and I found a God who loves me.

Once I got out, I changed. I wanted a better life away from my toxic family. I wanted to get my education and get a job and live a full life. No more wishing I was dead. No more lonely days. I wanted more.

Then I found YouthHope. YouthHope was like a breath of fresh air. I felt alive when I went there. I felt loved and cared for. It was the complete opposite of what I have felt my whole life. I felt hope.

When I first walked into YouthHope, I was welcomed with open arms. Volunteers said hi to me, Heidi gave me a hug, and kids like me came up and said "Welcome to Heidi's". There was no judgement or no pressure. I was shown around the building and then I ate a delicious meal. I learned about all of the things that YouthHope does and I was asked questions about what I needed help with.

When they first asked me, I didn't know what to say. I was kind of shocked by the question and didn't fully trust these people. But as I kept coming back to YouthHope day after day, I noticed something. I started to trust again. I started to open up and allowed YouthHope to help me.

That's when I started working towards my GED. I get tutored twice a week at YouthHope and love the one-on-one tutoring. I don't feel stupid when I don't know the answer and I know that I can ask any question I want without being looked at funny.

I'm also starting the Job Training Program at YouthHope. I just finished my resume and Judy is taking me out soon to go look for jobs. I know it won't be a dream job, but it will be a start. My goal is to save my money and then go help little kids in need. Kids like me.

I owe so much to YouthHope. For their love, kindness, and trust! Thank you YouthHope!

## YouthHope Housing Update

We want to welcome our new R.A. to our housing program.

Welcome Seth Gustafson!

We are so thrilled to have you and we're excited to see all of the great things that happen in our boys house while you are here!

## A Note From the Founder



Spring is here! I can't believe how fast this year is going. I love this time of year and what it represents. New life and new opportunities.

Our youth are experiencing spring in their own lives. Many youth are using our newly built computer lab to create resumes, take their Food Handlers Test, look for job opportunities, and work on homework. These youth are moving forward and we are so blessed to

be able to provide a space, volunteers, and resources needed so these youth can make the necessary changes.

Our current need at YouthHope is our food pantry. Our food pantry is a place for youth to take nonperishable food items to eat when they aren't at YouthHope. The youth will sometimes take enough for their family or friends, take some food for their meals on the weekend, or for a snack at school the next day. It's a very

important aspect of YouthHope. We need more items for our food pantry. These items need to be nonperishable, individually wrapped food. Some examples would be cup of noodles, granola bars, canned goods, rice, etc. If you can donate please drop off the items at YouthHope during our drop off hours. Thank you for feeding and caring for our youth!

Our drop off hours are Monday-Wednesday 10:00-12:30 and Thursday 12:30-2:00