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- Ann Whitlock

The YouthHope Post



Summer is Here!

We are so excited to announce that 35 of our youth graduated last month! Graduating from high school is such a huge accomplishment for our youth. For the majority of our youth, they are the first generation to graduate from high school.

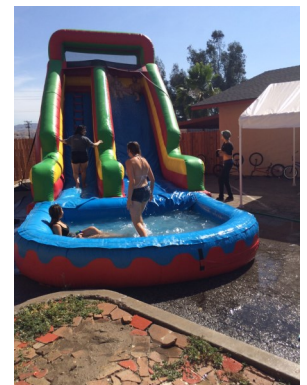
The majority of the youth we serve do not have a support system. They don't have someone to tell them to do homework, go to class, get good grades. It comes from the youth alone. This is where YouthHope steps in. We encourage, provide what they need, and celebrate their achievements. We have several youth who come to YouthHope with their progress report or report card in hand, smiling

from ear to ear, and pride beaming from them to show us their grades. They want to see how excited and proud we are of them. They want to see all the staff and volunteers jumping up and down, screaming with excitement, and wrapping them up in a big hug. They don't receive that kind of support anywhere else so we make sure to show how amazing they are and how bright of a future they have.

So at the end of each year, we celebrate! We celebrate the successes of the year, we celebrate those who graduated, those who enrolled in a trade school or college, and those who passed their classes.

We rented a giant waterslide, we BBQed hamburgers, and made root beer floats. The

youth had a blast. It was also a time for healing. After a rough year of losing one of our youth, it was a great time to enjoy each other and celebrate the positives. We are so excited for what the summer will bring and looking forward to continuing to help our youth.



Meet Carolyn

Carolyn is one of our incredible GED tutors at YouthHope. She spends hours with our youth, teaching them one-on-one.

Being a GED tutor takes extreme patience and the ability to break down subjects into easy-to-learn concepts. Many of our youth never finished middle school and have been out of school for years. They come to our GED tutors feeling defeated and our tutors

take them and show them what great potential they have.

Carolyn is especially great at making the youth feel loved and proud.

Carolyn learned about YouthHope when Heidi spoke at her church. She was volunteering at another organization at the time, but as she learned about YouthHope, she thought it would be a better fit because she knew how great the need was for helping youth.

Carolyn was a teacher at The

Packing House and Arrowhead Christian Academy for 13 years teaching Algebra, Home Econ, and Archery.

Her favorite part of tutoring is being able to encourage our youth when no one else will.

When Carolyn's not at YouthHope, she is busy gardening, sewing, being a puppeteer, or an archer.

Thank you so much Carolyn! You are such an important and needed part of YouthHope.

Overcoming All Obstacles

My life changed when I was 15. I went from living with my mom who was married to my stepdad who lived in a house in a nice neighborhood with stable jobs to living with my dad.

My dad lived under some bushes with his girlfriend. Why did I move with my dad? Well I wasn't the smartest student in school. I failed a lot of classes and got in trouble. I wasn't smart so I didn't do the work, which left me with nothing to do except get in trouble. My mom and step dad were getting tired of having to deal with me and the school so they told me if I messed up again, I would have to move in with my dad. Well I got in trouble the following week and was kicked out. I don't think my mom and step dad knew how bad my dad was. They knew he wasn't the best influence, but I don't think they knew he was a cocaine addict living under a bush.

So I packed my things and lived with my dad. At first, I felt bad for him. He kept saying that its my moms fault that he was living like this and I started to believe him. I grew a hate for my mom and wanted to help my dad. Before I knew it, my dad was asking me if I wanted some cocaine. I told him no at first, but after he and his girlfriend kept asking me, I figured I would try it. My dad wouldn't give me something that was bad right? Within days, I was a cocaine addict. It happened so fast.

I quickly learned that my dad was not looking out for me. He was only looking out for himself and his girlfriend. I was more of an inconvenience to them. He couldn't take care of me, but he couldn't get rid of me either.

It was a tough couple of months. I wasn't in school, I spent my days doing drugs, and my nights trying to find a better place to stay.

One day while I was walking around by myself trying to figure out how I was going to survive my new life, I ran into some kids my age. I started talking to them and asking them how they live on the streets. They gave me some tips on where to find food, where to sleep, and they also told me about YouthHope. They told me that Heidi could help me.

I was so desperate so I decided to go. I enjoyed the hot meal that they gave me. It tasted good and it was homemade. I missed home cooked meals so bad.

Heidi came over and introduced herself. She asked what she could do to help and I just started crying. I needed help so bad. When the people that have taken care of you your whole life give up, it feels like your whole world has fallen apart.

Heidi helped right away. She got me into school and she got me into a rehab program so I could get cleaned up.

Its been a long road, but I just graduated from school, my dad is now clean with the help of a local homeless shelter and we live in an apartment together. He still struggles with keeping a job, but he's clean and he's working really hard to get a better life.

I go to a trade school where I'm learning to be a welder. After I graduate in 6 months, the school will help me find a job. My goal is to have my own place in the next year and then I'm going to start saving for a car. Thank you YouthHope! I would be lost without your help.

Did You Know?

Since 2001, YouthHope has passed out over 1,700 bus passes to youth who are going to school or who recently obtained a job!

Our youth are moving forward and are determined to break the cycle of poverty and homelessness!

A Note From the Founder



Summer is here! Summer at YouthHope is very different than the rest of the year. Many of our youth are busy with summer jobs, summer school, finding a more permanent place to live, or trying to figure out what they want to do the following school year.

We really try to start summer off each year with a celebration. We like to show our youth how proud we are of them and show them that no matter how

small of an accomplishment they made during the year, its an accomplishment to be proud of and to celebrate.

We had so much fun with our youth at our end of the school year party and it was a great way to start summer. With a water slide, a BBQ, and root-beer floats, it was a time for hanging out with each other and celebrating.

As we enter this season of warm weather, I would encourage you to continue to be in-

involved with YouthHope. We need volunteers that can come hang out with our youth during our feeding times, we need GED tutors that can tutor 1-2 youth for a couple hours each week, and of course we still need donations of bus passes, nonperishable foods, clothes, and food gift cards.

Thank you for caring for our youth and helping our mission move forward. Without your support, there would be no YouthHope.