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# The YouthHope Post

## Please Join us for...4th Annual Day in The Park Car Show and Family Fun Extravaganza!



Where: **Sylvan Park in Redlands**  
When: **September 9, 2017 8:00 am to 3:00 pm**  
Who: **Everyone!**

What: **Car Show, Local Vendors, Food, Kids Zone with games, giant inflatable slide, along with much more! Entry is free with options to purchase tickets for the Kids Zone, purchase opportunity tickets, and purchase food items.**



### Staff Spotlight: Monica Saunders

Meet Monica! Monica has been a part of YouthHope since 2009. She served as a board member from 2009-2015. In 2015, Monica joined the staff as the Director of Grants.

As a Director of Grants, Monica writes grants to Foundations asking for financial support. There are many amazing Foundations that share the same vision as YouthHope and they choose to invest in us to see our programs and our vision grow. Monica is also in charge of our social media and monthly newsletters.

Monica started working at YouthHope because of her passion for helping at-risk and homeless youth. She saw first hand how many youth needed help when she went out with Heidi and handed out PB&J sandwiches on the streets. She loves seeing success stories of our youth and watching the cycle of homelessness break.

Monica's favorite part about working at YouthHope is seeing how many youth YouthHope has helped. She loves seeing our youth working in local establish-

ments or seeing them move into their very own apartment. She also loves seeing how dedicated the staff and volunteers are. They all love our youth so much and work so hard to help them.

When Monica isn't working at YouthHope she is usually with her husband and her son finding a new adventure to go on. She enjoys traveling, being with family and friends, and going to baseball games.

Thanks Monica for dedicating your time to YouthHope and helping change the lives of our youth.

## Youth Story: Family Isn't Always Blood

I don't understand the phrase "Home is where the heart is" because I have never had a home. I've never had a house either. I've lived on the streets since I was 6. And before that, we lived with different relatives and jumped from house to house. My dad has been in prison my whole life because of drug charges and other things that I don't want to know about. Its always been just me and my mom.

My days of growing up always included being left alone for most of the day. My mom has made it clear my whole life that I was not a planned baby. She never wanted me and would not make sacrifices for me. So she goes off during the day and does drugs and leaves me at home.

Since I've never had a home or a family, every day I go out and I search for family. I've been involved in many gangs because they are more like family to me than anything else I have experienced. Ya we've done many things that I regret, but I knew that from the beginning, they would have my back and treat me like I mattered.

Somehow, I managed to graduate high school even though my home life was chaotic. We moved to Redlands a few years ago and I heard about YouthHope very early on. I started going to YouthHope because I wanted some free food and to hang out with my friends. I'm a very charming person so it was easy to go in, eat, hang out, and leave without having to open up to anyone.

After attending a few months, I found myself talking to Heidi one-on-one. She knew that there was more to me than just a charming, happy, young man. I opened up to her and she wanted to help me. I've never had someone offer to help me. To help me find a job, teach me how to save money, love me, and not judge me. It was the first time that I actually felt

like I had family. Heidi felt like the mom that I never had. She genuinely wanted the best for me and was willing to do whatever she could to make it happen.

So now I come to YouthHope all the time. I come for the basic stuff like food and clothes, but I also come for the stuff that's going to help me build a better future. I come for job training, for resume writing, for Food Handlers Certificate, and for the support.

I have a long ways to go, but I also have come a long ways. With the help of YouthHope, I know that I will eventually have my own home and my own family.

### Did You Know?

75% of the youth we serve are between the ages of 14 and 18!

### Success at YH

In 2016, we passed out 780 monthly bus passes. These youth have to have a job or be going to school to receive a bus pass!

## A Note From the Founder



I am so excited that our fundraiser "A Day in The Park" is right around the corner. It is one of my favorite fundraisers because there is something for everyone in the family to enjoy. You can walk around and look at cars, you can shop and support local vendors, you can enjoy the kids zone, or you can enjoy the food and drinks. It will be a great day for the whole family. Make sure you invite someone who hasn't heard about YouthHope so they can learn about how we help the youth of the Inland Empire.

There will be plenty of opportunities to learn about YouthHope and also support YouthHope through opportunity drawings, silent auctions, and through the purchase of the Kids Zone tickets.

We are seeing lots of progress in our youth. Many of our youth who have been around for years are getting tired of the street life. They are going into rehab, getting enrolled in school, getting jobs, and learning to save money. They don't want to stay in the life they are living. They want to

have a better life. They don't want to continue the cycle of drug abuse and poverty. We are seeing change and its so exciting to be able to help these youth.

Without your support we wouldn't be able to run these programs and offer the help that we do. Thank you so much for making a difference in Redlands and in the Inland Empire. If you want to make a difference in the lives of our youth, visit our website [www.youthhope.org/donate](http://www.youthhope.org/donate).