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Northwest Youth Services News

Northwest Youth Services Quarterly Newsletter
Second Quarter 2011



Darian's Story

At two, Darian had already been without stable housing for most of his life.

With his mother working her way through school and his father living in a different state, it was difficult for this young family to have the basic necessities without family support.

At 19, Darian's mom was without an income to support the two of them and they had been living in Darian's great-grandmother's two bedroom home. Darian and his mother slept on the floor.

Darian's mother humbly walked into Whatcom County's Northwest Youth Services office to ask for help—her grandmother was no longer able to provide shelter for them and asked them to leave the family's home. She had nowhere else to turn.

NWYS accepted Darian's mom into the Transitional Living Program and was able to stabilize their living situation by placing them in a furnished apartment—in their own rooms and their own beds.

During the next year and a half, Darian was enrolled in daycare as his mother found a full-time job. Darian's dad relocated here and the three of them were able to move into stable housing, independent from NWYS.

Though the first few years of his life proved a struggle for his parents, with the support of NWYS and some very hard work by his parents, Darian is excited about the opportunities in all of their futures.

2011 Point-in-Time Count

In the wee hours of the morning on January 29th, 2011 before the sun rose, volunteers and service providers in all Washington counties were asked to take to the streets, homeless housing programs, drop-in centers, motels and jails to count the number of individuals experiencing homelessness on this one night—this "point in time".

The Whatcom County Homeless Count report, "Everyone Counts!" was recently released and reported that 1,311 homeless persons were counted in Whatcom County on this one night.

37% were under the age of 18—equaling 449 homeless youth. This is a staggering number of children without homes, but even more devastating is the identification of 57 of those youth were on their own—they had no families or guardians to care for them. This means that 57 children age 12-17 were without an adult or a stable, safe support system.

In addition, with an unemployment rate exceeding 19% nationally for 16-24 year olds, Whatcom County volunteers found 264 homeless young people in this age group during their count.

As youth transition into young adulthood, we are finding more and more of them relying on the support of their families. Unfortunately, this leaves those without family support nowhere to turn but to the homeless housing providers.



Annual Vision Dinner — November 2011

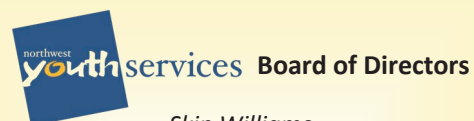
Northwest Youth Services biggest annual fundraiser. With great food, an auction, fun and games—you will not want to miss this one!

Wine Gala — date to be determined

We held our first ever Wine Gala in January. This event was so much fun that we plan to make it an annual event and are working to establish the perfect date. Watch our upcoming newsletters for more information.

2012 Soup For Shelter — April 2012

We just wrapped up this fabulous event—but it will be back next year!



Skip Williams
President

Karen Thomas
Vice-President

Laura Brem
Member

Jeannine Lyons
Secretary

Amber Wichers
Member

Gary Pickering
Treasurer

Russ Wildenberg
Member

**Help NWYS save money and promote
your business at the same time!**



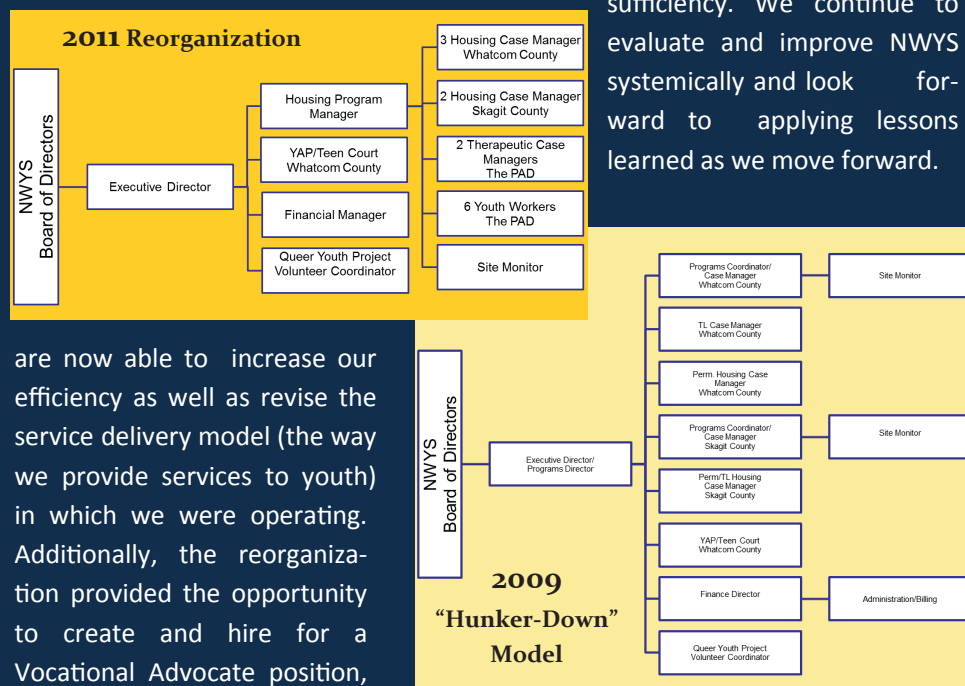
Sponsor an upcoming quarterly newsletter and reach nearly 700 people. For more information please contact Riannon at 360.734.9862 ext. 116 or riannonb@nwys.org.

NWYS—Adapting for the Future

Riannon Bardsley, Executive Director

With the help of a grant from Seattle based non-profit, Building Changes, Northwest Youth Services was able to begin 2011 in a new model. No longer in the “hunker-down” model caused by the state budget cuts of 2009, we

investing in the futures of the young people NWYS programs work with. With an unemployment rate hovering at 19% for young people, NWYS saw this investment of resources as a crucial step in ensuring future self-sufficiency. We continue to evaluate and improve NWYS systemically and look forward to applying lessons learned as we move forward.



are now able to increase our efficiency as well as revise the service delivery model (the way we provide services to youth) in which we were operating. Additionally, the reorganization provided the opportunity to create and hire for a Vocational Advocate position,



Teen Court

For the past 13 years, NWYS, in collaboration with nearly all the local high schools and the Whatcom County court system, has administered the Teen Court Program.

Through the Teen Court process, hundreds of students each year are educated about the legal system.

Student volunteers feel empowered as the court is run entirely by youth, for youth.

Offenders come away with an understanding of the impact their actions have upon their community. They are impressed with judgments handed down by their peers.

As we wrap up another successful year of our program, we wanted to provide some details of the statistics of Teen Court.

- ◆ 96% of the offenders who came through the program this year successfully completed the terms of their Teen Court contracts.
- ◆ More than 150 volunteers gave their time and energy to make this youth-run program work smoothly.
- ◆ Most of the cases seen in Teen Court were either alcohol or marijuana related followed closely by shoplifting.
- ◆ Peer jurors assigned more than 1,100 hours of community service to be served by offenders at a non-profit organization of their choice.
- ◆ More than half were assigned jury duty which allows them to experience the judicial system from the other side.

It has been a great year with lots of new students getting involved and we are looking forward to next year. Thank you to the students and volunteers who make Teen Court possible.

NWYS P.A.D. PROJECT



Doors open in 2011

Renovations of the NWYS facilities will create safe housing and drop-in services essential to ending youth homelessness in Whatcom County:

What’s planned:

- \$200,000 in renovations to the NWYS building
- Scheduled to be completed by October 2011

The first phase of this project will provide:

- six beds of emergency housing
- drop-in services to 70 unduplicated youth
- vocational services (education and employment readiness)
- family reunification and/or permanent connections
- laundry services
- showers
- food
- clothing

Thank you to our current partners:

- Moceri Construction Inc.
- LMB Design and Tech Services
- IMCO General Construction, Inc.
- Zervas Group Architects
- Cascade Drywall, Inc.
- Seegers Painting Company

Donation Request

NWYS holds three annual fundraisers to support the organization and its mission of helping at-risk and homeless youth. Our events feature auctions, “balloon pops” and other fun activities.

We hope we can count on your support and generosity and encourage you to consider donating.

A donated item or service from you and/or your business is tax deductible and would be a great gift to the organization to help us advance our mission.

All donations and donors will be recognized on our website, on Facebook, at the event where the donation is used and any other way that we can find to show our appreciation.

A donation is a great way to promote your business within our community while supporting a worthwhile cause at the same time.

To donate, please contact Riannon at riannonb@nwys.org or 360.734.9862 ext. 116.

To get involved visit
www.nwys.org/pad

2011 Soup for Shelter

On Friday, April 16th Northwest Youth Services celebrated our 7th annual Soup for Shelter fundraiser. Restaurants throughout the county donated their soup and time to help fund at-risk, runaway, and homeless youth. The event raised \$7,600 to go towards keeping youth safe and on the path to success while maintaining their uniqueness. This year’s soup winners were:

Meat: Zuppa Toscana presented by the Olive Garden

Vegetarian: Thai Coconut Curry presented by Harris Ave Café

Seafood: Saffron Smoked Salmon Chowder presented by Swan Café

Poultry: Avocado Chicken Soup presented by Skylark’s Café

Vegan: Red Apple Acorn Squash presented by Hotel Bellwether Harbor Side Restaurant and Cocktail Lounge (made by Brandon Stiers and Jacob Spooner)

Best in Show: Coconut Curried Butternut Squash and Apple presented by Mount Bakery (made by Jim and Samantha)

Thank you to everyone who provided soup, volunteered their time and for those who simply came to enjoy the soup!

We need you— join the NWYS Board!

Northwest Youth Services is looking for passionate volunteers to dedicate their time to at-risk, runaway and homeless youth. The NWYS Board of Directors is in need of community representatives with the following traits, skill sets or experiences:

- Criminal and/or employment attorney
- Works or lives in Skagit county
- Multi-lingual
- Connection to the faith-based community
- Staff for an elected official
- Personal experience with domestic violence
- A college or university connection
- Of ethnic descent

The very essence of leadership is its purpose. And the purpose of leadership is to accomplish a task. That is what leadership does—and what it does is more important than what it is or how it works.

~Colonel Dandridge M. Malone

If you would like to be an important part of shaping the future of NWYS and the youth we serve, please contact Riannon Bardsley, Executive Director, at riannonb@nwys.org or 360.734.9862 ext. 116.