



Northwest Youth Services

11.08.2019

Light Their Path Gata

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www.NWYS.org



Meet Jay.

We asked Jay to share his experience as a resident of 22 North and as a participant of the Vocational Readiness program.

It is easy to fill a need when it's an obvious one. Hungry? Feed them. Cold? Clothe them and give them blankets, or even better, house them.

What it is not easy to do is to meet the other needs, the subtle ones, the ones that often go under the radar. Sure, it starts at housing; basic stability. But, to uncover those more understated needs you have to listen and observe, and do it well. For that, Northwest Youth Services has done me well.

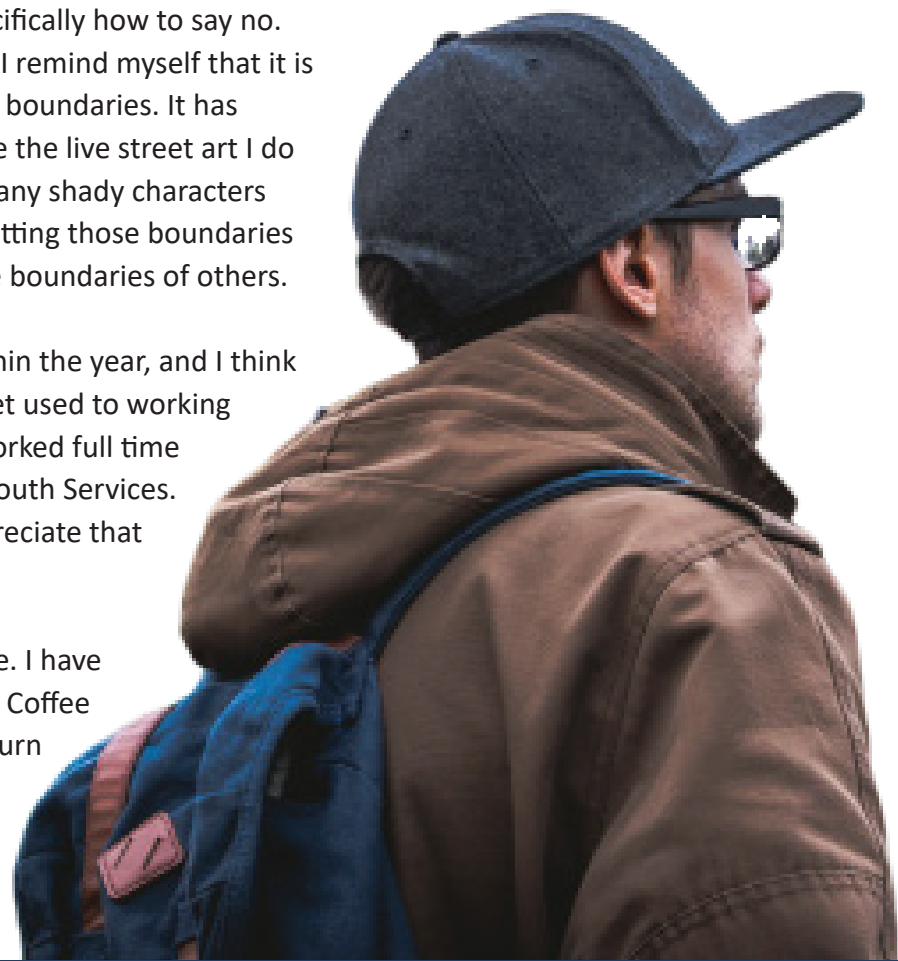
I am learning to speak up because a significant effort, at the very least, will be made to meet my needs. I have a job through Northwest Youth Services currently and am planning to start working in the We Grow Garden this spring. I feel that these programs are especially well thought out for youth struggling with mental health.

The processes of employment through Northwest Youth Services has significantly reduced the stress surrounding making mistakes at work, which I feel is a large part of why many people who experience homelessness often can get a job, but may have a hard time keeping one.

Living at 22 North has taught me boundaries, specifically how to say no. While I still worry that I sound too harsh at times, I remind myself that it is especially important to my sobriety to draw those boundaries. It has translated into other aspects of my life as well, like the live street art I do downtown, where I don't put up with nearly as many shady characters as I used to. Counseling helps me stay steady in setting those boundaries and also learning where I may need to respect the boundaries of others.

I hope to start work for a cell phone company within the year, and I think working with We Grow this season will help me get used to working more hours again, as it has been a while since I worked full time consistently. I have found mentors at Northwest Youth Services. They are patient yet stern about work ethic, I appreciate that very much.

I am sure more opportunities will continue to arise. I have an art show coming up in early April at Black Drop Coffee House in downtown Bellingham, and I hope to return to school within a couple of years. For now, I will continue to keep irons in the fire, and work on improving myself.





What started as a vision to create a safe space for homeless youth, became a reality as The Ground Floor opened its doors this January.

A lot of time, planning, and hard work went into the creation of The Ground Floor. Yet, after the dust of construction was cleared, there was still a lingering question on many minds: will youth show up to this new space dedicated just for them?

It has been about a month since opening day, and we are happy to report that youth are indeed coming to the space! Below we share numbers that help display the early successes of The Ground Floor. These numbers only hint at the greatest achievements of this new space: the strong sense of community developing amongst our youth, the expressions of appreciation for the quality of the space and the staff, and the sense of hope and progress that many of our visitors feel when they're at The Ground Floor.

In our first week of operation, 22 youth visited the space to get a warm meal, do laundry, take a shower, or to reserve some private space in one of our three Quiet Rooms. In the second week, those numbers had grown to 28 and in the third, we had 36 individuals visiting The Ground Floor. We've noticed that many of the youth that come to The Ground Floor are now visiting repeatedly, and often bringing along others. By creating a safe space that youth want to come to on a daily basis, we are able to better serve them throughout all of the programs offered.

The housing, vocational, and mental health staff can support individuals on a daily basis and get them connected with resources much more efficiently. By the end of our first month of operation, 19 youth filled out applications for housing, a critical step in the process of finding stable housing. Two youth are being housed directly through Northwest Youth Service's housing programs, and two other youth have been connected with a home of their own.

Our vocational program has also had success at The Ground Floor, connecting nine youth to paid internships and job training opportunities. Five youth who are participating in job training programs at Habitat for Humanity, Re-Store, and Appliance Depot, with Northwest Youth Services paying their wages through the Youth Jobs program. We can't wait to see what the months and years ahead hold for The Ground Floor and the young people who access the day-use space.

**To get involved
and learn more,
email us at
Hello@NWYS.org.**

Northwest Youth Services is seeking a visionary and strategic Executive Director to lead our agency into its next iteration.

The Northwest Youth Service's Board of Directors is seeking a candidate with proven, significant, and successful nonprofit leadership, including the ability to oversee fundraising, programs, overall management, and financial performance. The Executive Director will work with the board and staff leadership team to build on and strengthen our agency's track record of innovation, collaboration, and mission success.

Is this you or someone you know? Read more about the position and selection process at www.NWYS.org/jobs.

As Northwest Youth Services moves into this next chapter with new leadership, we will continue our commitment to collaborate with young people and you, our amazing community partners, to realize the vision that all young people in our community have a place to belong: to be safe, heard, and valued.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to e-mail Hello@NWYS.org - we look forward to keeping you up-to-date as we move through this process together.



Fill The Pantry

Help us fill The Ground Floor's fridge and pantry with healthy foods! We are grateful to have a kitchen in this new space for youth to cook meals for themselves and each other. Help us stock spices, dry goods, fresh fruits and veggies and more.

Contribute to our Facebook campaign or contact us at Hello@NWYS.org to join in filling the pantry!

Support The 2019 Gala

We are seeking support for the 2019 Light Their Path Gala. Help make this year our most successful yet by donating your time, talents or treasure. We are looking for volunteers to help on the Gala Planning Committee, as Table Captains, and as Sponsors.

To learn more or get involved contact Development Coordinator, Sigourney Gundy at: SigourneyG@NWYS.org or (360) 734-9862 Ext. 118.