



A Year of Strength

Letter From The Executive Director

2018 is going to be a year of strength for Northwest Youth Services. Over the past year we laid the groundwork for the year ahead. Together, we have:

- Broken ground on 22 North, expanding services by adding 20 new units for at-risk, runaway, and homeless youth (pictured above).
- Collaborated with the First Congregational Church of Bellingham on plans to create a day center for young people experiencing homelessness.
- Kicked off a new on-site Behavioral Health Program that will increase the quality of services to more than 200 young people a year.

We have been through many transitions this past year. Thank you for your support in ensuring that these transitions built strength, expanded programs, and better met the needs of young people experiencing homelessness in our community. We are energized for the year ahead. As our organization has grown, so has the structure in which we operate. This year we are excited to employ a new organizational chart. Please visit nwys.org/staff to view the organizational changes. Thank you for investing in the futures of youth. Your generosity changes lives.

Welcome, New Directors of NWYS!



HOLLIE BROWN | BOARD OF DIRECTORS MARKETING MANAGER, PEOPLES BANK

"I joined NWYS because I want to help raise awareness about the homeless and at-risk youth in our community. Until I met Riannon at NWYS, I had no idea how many youth need our help!"



ALEX BRUNER | BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOUNDER, INTELLITONIC

"I joined NWYS with the intent to help raise community awareness of the programs offered by NWYS, and to reach new supporters who might otherwise not have known that there was an organization that offered what NWYS provides."



NICOLE TORRES | CLINICAL DIRECTOR

"As a former runaway youth, I am excited to join the team of NWYS. From my personal experiences, I recognize the importance of having a place where young people have the opportunity to grow, be heard, have the space to pursue their vision, and empower themselves. NWYS provides this essential function in the community - and I am honored to join the team."

Team Member Shout Out

STEPHANIE HOST | STREET OUTREACH INTERN WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY HUMAN SERVICES

Stephanie is always very present when working with youth at Northwest Youth Services. From day one of her internship, she approached the work with integrity, an open mind, and open heart. We are lucky to have someone who is so willing to work creatively and collaboratively to support the youth in our community. Thank you, Stephanie!

Program Highlight



QYP Fact

40 youth completed self-care reports in December!

For queer youth who aren't out or who live with families that don't accept them, the holidays can be painful. This winter break, the Queer Youth Project shared videos of community members from every corner of the county voicing their love and acceptance of queer youth over social media. Thank you to everyone who participated! Visit www.facebook.com/NWQYP/videos to view all 24 videos.

“With this simple project we can remind our queer youth that they are worthy of love and acceptance, help them feel seen and celebrated, and give them the message that no matter how alone they might feel, there are people who care and places to turn for help.”

-Page, Queer Youth Project Coordinator

Michael's Story

Northwest Youth Services has been one of the most incredible programs my life has led me to. I've gone from feeling hopeless and abusing drugs, to a functioning community member, helping people whenever I get the chance. Back then, I was supporting my mother, paying the bills and rent and buying food because she had



become very ill. With all the stress from work and home, I began using drugs even more heavily than I had been. In an attempt to cope, I developed an addiction. With my obsession of drugs, I lost both a place to live and my job. My mother and I eventually ended up living on the streets.

“NWYS was the perfect program for me to have an opportunity to begin my life.”

My mother was able to get a place in the Anacortes Family Center, leaving me free to run-and-gun with my addiction. I started selling drugs to support my use. Then I heard about Northwest Youth Services through word of mouth. I thought it to be a “too good to

be true” program, like there was going to be too hard of hoops to jump through. That was not the case. NWYS was the perfect program for me to have an opportunity to begin my life. I'm now approaching my eighth month mark of complete sobriety. If not for having housing, my chances of staying sober would be slim to none. For once in my life I feel like I am exactly where I'm supposed to be and I know things are going to work out. I plan on being in school in the near future to follow my dream of working with computers and technology. I have a job and am doing well for myself. Life right now is pretty good.



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involved](http://www.nwys.org/get-involved) to learn more.*

Thank you to our Youth
Jobs community partners!



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