



Community Fundraiser Toolkit

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YouthCare's Mission and Vision

YouthCare works to end youth homelessness and to ensure that young people are valued for who they are and empowered to achieve their potential. YouthCare envisions a community where no young person experiences homelessness, all young people have the opportunity to thrive, and the systems that oppress them are dismantled.

YouthCare's History

YouthCare works to end youth homelessness and to ensure that young people are valued for who they are and empowered to achieve their potential. Founded in 1974, YouthCare was one of the first shelters to serve runaway and homeless youth on the West Coast. Since then, we have expanded to 13 sites serving over 1,200 youth every year. Through a range of services including prevention, shelter, housing, education, and employment training, we ensure that young people experiencing homelessness have the hope, skills, and self-confidence needed to thrive.

Youth Homelessness

No one ever grows up wanting to be homeless. The young people we meet are navigating life circumstances beyond their control. They all want the chance to stabilize and thrive.

We know all families experience crises. But in some families, crisis is fueled by common root causes that lead to homelessness: poverty, racism, homophobia, and underfunded systems of foster care, behavioral health, and education.

In a national study, over 90% of homeless youth report family conflict in the home, and a quarter suffer from abuse or neglect. Of the unaccompanied homeless youth and young adults in [King County](#):

- Over one-half are youth of color (59%)
- One-third identify as LGBTQ+ (33%)
- One-third have been in foster care (33%)
- As of 2017, one-third have been kicked out of their homes (35%)
- One-half are navigating mental health challenges (51%), but mental health resources for young people are extremely limited

Youth homelessness is different than adult homelessness: young people often couch-surf between friends and family and many do not identify as homeless, instead seeing their experience as a temporary. On the streets, homeless young people are at higher risk of exploitation and trafficking: about one fifth of homeless youth report being trafficked. Additionally, young people's brains are still rapidly developing and don't reach maturation until the age of 25. For this reason, the adult homeless system is often unsafe and inappropriate for young adults

Every young person has potential. For youth in particular, there is an inherent curiosity about the future and the possibilities of life. We must leverage this opportunity. Almost 50% of homeless adults in our community reference experiencing homelessness for the first time before the age of 25. Helping young people move ahead is our most effective—and humane—strategy to preventing and ending adult homelessness.

Overview of Community Fundraising

Thank you for organizing a fundraiser for YouthCare! We are so excited that you have decided to host an event in support of our work. Thank you in advance for your leadership, passion, and planning—we are grateful to have your friendship and trust and want you to have the best experience hosting!

House parties and events are essential to YouthCare as they engage supporters like you in our mission to end youth homelessness. They also give people the chance to put their values into action and get more involved with YouthCare.

Your benefit for YouthCare will spark a dialogue about youth homelessness in our community and give you the chance to involve your friends and family in an organization that is important to you. The YouthCare Community Fundraiser toolkit walks you through everything you need to know and do to organize a successful gathering that will get your friends talking, supporting, and getting more involved.

Spread the Word

Most people want to help—they just need to be asked. You can send emails, use postcards or flyers, or post to Facebook, Twitter, and other social media. Bring up the event at meetings and group gatherings. Host a party and ask guests to donate. YouthCare can help draft language about our work and provide brochures, postcards, and other collateral.

Make it Easy to Donate

Incorporate fundraising into a special event or party by asking friends or family to make a donation to YouthCare as an “entry fee” or in lieu of gifts. Donations can be made online through [YouthCare’s website](#) or mailed or dropped off to YouthCare’s main office (2500 NE 54th Street, Seattle, WA, 98105). Please make sure that checks are made out to YouthCare.

Celebrate Your Success!

Don’t forget to thank your donors! Post pictures of your donations to Facebook (and tag [YouthCare!](#)), or share your success in your group’s newsletter. If you are sharing publicly, let us know; we want to recognize your great event!

Have questions? Contact us at info@youthcare.org or (206) 267-3084.

Event Ideas

Below are some popular fundraising ideas, but feel free to add your own twist for something new! Your event is limited only by your resourcefulness, your creativity, and your imagination.

- ❖ Birthday Party
- ❖ Children's Birthdays
- ❖ Holiday Party
- ❖ Scavenger Hunt
- ❖ Wine and Cheese Party
- ❖ Holiday Party
- ❖ Pool Party
- ❖ Super Bowl or World Series Party
- ❖ Karaoke Night

Create a simple, but fun event that involves your club, neighborhood, or entire community.

- ❖ Bake Sale
- ❖ Car Wash
- ❖ Yard Sale
- ❖ Softball/Baseball Home Run Derby or Game
- ❖ Sports Tournament (basketball, pickle ball, tennis)
- ❖ Spa Night
- ❖ Holiday Celebration (Halloween, Valentine's Day, etc.)

The event ideas below require more up-front costs, as well as additional volunteer support, longer lead times, and venue considerations but the extra effort will be worth the reward!

- ❖ Golf Tournament
- ❖ Auctions (silent, or on-line)
- ❖ Music Concert or Play
- ❖ Dance
- ❖ Comedy Night
- ❖ Pledge Walk or Run
- ❖ Skate-a-thon
- ❖ Arts & Crafts Sale
- ❖ Antique Car/Motorcycle/Truck Show

Things to consider when planning an event

Below is a general list of questions to keep in mind when planning your event.

Who?

Who will be invited: friends, family, coworkers, church or social group, neighborhood, etc.?

Is the event targeted for youth, adults, or both?

Once you have identified your targeted audience, compile a guest list.

What?

What is the goal (besides having fun and supporting homeless youth)?

- To raise money?
- Introduce friends or family to YouthCare?
- Collect gift cards or in-kind donations?

When?

When would you like the event to take place (create a back-up plan in case of rain or other outside influence)?

When should you schedule entertainment or services?

When should you prepare an email or printed invitation, and when should the invitation be sent?

When should you get supplies?

See the "Sample Schedule of Events" on page 6 for help with creating a timeline.

Where?

Where will your event take place?

- At your home?
- At a restaurant or other venue?
- At a community center?

Are there any permits or permissions required to use the venue?

Does the location supply the equipment you need or will you need to rent anything?

How?

How will food be prepared and set up? Does it need to be picked up or delivered?

How do you want the venue to be organized (registration or greeting area, tables for eating, dance floor, etc.)?

Do you need to create an event committee or recruit volunteers to help before or at the event?

Sample Schedule of Events

The tasks and time needed to plan vary widely depending on the type of event. This sample schedule is only meant to serve as a guideline to help you create your own list of tasks and timeline. Be sure to think about every aspect of your event and add any tasks that are specific to your fundraising efforts.

6-8 weeks + before the event

- Select the type of event (*see "Event Ideas" on page 4*)
- Identify venue options
- Set date and time and secure event location (create back-up plan in case of inclement weather)
- Create a guest list
- Select suppliers of food, party favors, etc.
- Recruit volunteers to help with planning and on the day of the event
- Decide how you will let people know about the event (printed invitation, email invitation, flyers, etc.)
- Contact and reserve entertainment (if necessary)
- Send out a Save the Date (save money by sending via email)

4-6 weeks before the event

- Reserve any rental items (tables, chairs, tents)
- Plan decorations
- Plan party menu and grocery list, or select/hire caterer or serving help
- Purchase your invitations and thank you cards
- Create a floor plan for the event
- Identify clean-up plan (rent dumpsters if necessary)
- Send invitations or event announcements (*see "Promoting Your Event" on page 7*)

3 weeks before the event

- Purchase supplies, favors, prizes
- Create an event day agenda
- Plan party activities

1 week before the event

- Obtain final RSVP list and follow up with any guests that have not responded
- Confirm all arrangements
- Confirm volunteers and provide them with assignments
- Prepare or make party favors
- If event is outside, check the weather and have a back-up plan
- Remember to save space in whatever fridge you will be using for the day of the event

A few days before the event

- Confirm the guest list
- Pick up groceries and beverages
- Prepare any foods that can be prepared in advance
- Monitor the weather reports

1 day before the event

- Pick up and set up rental equipment (if necessary)
- Thaw frozen foods
- Final clean up/coordinate last minute arrangements

The day of the event

- Pick up any remaining outstanding foods, equipment, or supplies
 - Decorate the event space
 - Execute a clean-up plan
- HAVE FUN!**

After the event

- Be sure that you have collected all of the money raised for your event
- Make a list of what worked and where improvements can be made while it's still fresh
- Return any borrowed or rented equipment
- Send donations to:
 - YouthCare**
 - Attn: Development Department**
 - 2500 NE 54th St.**
 - Seattle, WA 98105**
- Pay all vendors for their services
- Send thank you letters to your guests and sponsors
- Consider making it an annual event and start planning for next year!**

Promoting Your Event

The key to successful fundraising is getting the word out about your event. One way to increase participation is to put a personal spin on your fundraiser. That little extra twist can turn a typical fundraiser into a fun event that people want to be part of in whatever way they can. Don't forget to make clear that all proceeds will benefit YouthCare!

Below are some suggestions to help you spread the word

- Post your event on your group's website or internal site at your workplace
- Ask your YouthCare representative to post the event on [YouthCare's event page](#) or promote it on [YouthCare's Facebook page](#)
- Create and distribute posters and fliers. Ask others to help you post on bulletin boards in your community (library, church, gym, school, coffee shop, etc.).
- Send a press release to your local newspaper
- *Speak to your YouthCare representative for questions about promoting your event.*

If you are planning on submitting a press release or calendar announcement to promote your event, please send it to media@youthcare.org for approval, along with a list of which publications you plan to approach.

How YouthCare Can Help

YouthCare can provide:

- Advice and event planning expertise
- Promotional materials
- YouthCare logo
- A letter of authorization and validation to assist in fundraising

YouthCare will work hard to provide but cannot guarantee:

- Staff or volunteer support
- Promotion of your event through YouthCare communication such as our website, Facebook page, Twitter, or newsletter

YouthCare will not be able to provide:

- Funding or reimbursement of expenses
- Donor or vendor mailing list
- Attendance by youth we serve due to confidentiality
- Event attendance by an Executive team member
- Access to corporate or individual funders for event sponsorships
- Sales tax exempt purchaser information

Note: Due to the nature of our work, we take confidentiality very seriously. For this reason, youth will not be able to participate in community fundraising events. Additionally, community fundraising events cannot be held at any of our locations.

Other Ways You Can Help!

- ✓ Make a quick and easy [donation online](#) or purchase an item through [YouthCare's Wish List](#) on Amazon — items will be shipped directly to us.
- ✓ Sign up your group to prepare and serve a meal at www.youthcare.org/serveameal.
- ✓ Like us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#).

Sample posts for Social Media

Sample tweets

Looking for a worthwhile cause to support?
@YouthCareSEA helps #Seattle's #homeless
#youthstaysafe and warm. www.youthcare.org.

My family is supporting @YouthCareSEA to get
#homeless #youth off the streets and preparing
for life. youthcare.org.

Sample Facebook posts

Looking for a worthwhile cause to support?
[YouthCare](#) helps Seattle's homeless youth stay
safe and warm.

My family is supporting [YouthCare](#) to get
homeless youth off the streets and preparing
for life. Will you join us