

YOUTH STORY: *Jessica is in College. She's Also Homeless.*

My name is Jessica. I'm a junior at the University of Washington Bothell majoring in Law, Economics, and Public Policy.

I also meet the definition of a "homeless youth," and am currently living at one of YouthCare's residential programs. I'd like to share with you some excerpts from my final essay for my Community Organizing class.

The word "homeless" usually conjures up images of people sleeping in tents on the streets. Homelessness is not often associated with words like hard-working, studious, or dedicated. In many ways homelessness in our city is very visible. But it's also very hidden.

As a college student, I often encounter misconceptions about homelessness and housing insecurity. For example, I recently took a community organizing class on campus. In this class, my peers and I were tasked with addressing a social issue. Our group tried to do something that no one else has organized on our campus: create resources for housing-insecure students, as housing insecurity on campus is not well-known.

Homelessness is complex—it looks different based on physical environments and can be experienced differently based on class, race, and gender.

As a homeless youth who has made it into college, I am able to use resources that many other homeless individuals do not have access to, such as being able to sleep in the campus library without being questioned because I do not look visibly homeless.

Unfortunately, some of my group members struggled to understand these complexities. Some thought the best solution was to communicate with our campus food pantry, but this didn't make sense to me. Housing insecurity does not necessarily equate to food insecurity. For example, the average person facing housing insecurity might be able to pay \$150 for groceries, but be unable to afford the average \$1500-per-month studio apartment



because they don't have support networks to help them pay rent.

As someone who has been homeless and experienced the stigma and humiliation that comes along with it, **I want a platform to advocate for myself and others in my situation because this creates the longest lasting and most effective change.** Unfortunately, I felt like my knowledge and my lived experience with homelessness was, for the most part, ignored.

If my peers better understood homelessness, we could have been able to approach the issue more comprehensively. Even though we were unsuccessful at creating new resources for housing-insecure students, we took the first step towards something bigger and better: a student-led effort to tackle the complex issue of housing insecurity on college campuses. *This was just the beginning—not the end.*

I'm content that we tried to bring awareness to a problem that is not well-understood or even well-known. And I'm pleased that I have the opportunity to share my story here, with you, so that you too can be a part of tackling the complexities of homelessness in your community.

Help youth prepare for their futures with the basics!



Help homeless youth by donating much-needed items.

At YouthCare, homeless youth are busy with school and jobs, and working with our staff to gain stability and build their futures. Simple things like hygiene items, jackets to keep warm, and a cell phone to stay in touch with a case manager mean a lot to the youth in our care.

You can help by donating the items below or organizing a drive to collect items:

- New underwear & socks
- Backpacks & school supplies
- Prepaid phones & minutes
- Hygiene items (shampoo, liquid soap, razors)
- Gift cards (Amazon, Visa, Fred Meyer, Target)
- Jackets & hoodies
- Sleeping bags
- New pillows

For more, visit youthcare.org/current-needs.

Donations can be delivered Monday-Friday 9am-5pm to 2500 NE 54th St., Seattle, WA 98105. You can also make a gift online at youthcare.org or purchase items from YouthCare's Wish List on Amazon.com. For more information, contact us at (206) 204-1404 or donations@youthcare.org.

Expanding Medical Care

YouthCare has significantly expanded healthcare services for young people in our care. Medical care is often a barrier for youth experiencing homelessness as many do not feel comfortable navigating the healthcare system or have had negative experiences with hospitals. To reduce these barriers, YouthCare began to expand the clinic located at YouthCare’s Orion Center. **Last June, the Orion Center clinic became an official Kaiser Permanente Family Medicine Residence site. Under the visionary leadership of Dr. Jennifer Hoock, medical residents now offer daily medical and behavioral health care at the Orion Center.** The partnership has also improved client access to laboratory tests and services.

Additionally, YouthCare has recently partnered with Swedish Medical Center. The Swedish Cherry Hill Campus now provides open clinic hours exclusively for YouthCare clients one day a week. The doctors provide both medical and behavioral healthcare for YouthCare clients. Swedish is particularly committed to working with YouthCare’s adolescent population ages 12-17. We are so grateful to partner with these extraordinary organizations to provide exceptional medical care for our youth.



Enhanced Services for Homeless Young Adults



YouthCare is excited to share some significant changes for our over-18 shelter services! Over the years, YouthCare has heard that using a lottery system to get a shelter bed can feel traumatic for young people. It’s hard for young people to stabilize if they don’t know whether they’ll have a place to sleep that night. In response to this feedback, YouthCare transitioned the Young Adult Shelter at YouthCare’s Orion Center from a lottery to a “right to return” system.

“Right to return” means that young people no longer need to wait outside to see if their lottery number is picked for a shelter bed. Instead, most of the shelter beds are now guaranteed, and young people have the right to return to that same bed every night for a maximum of 90 days.

Each young person also works with a case manager to help them with goal-setting and transitioning to long-term housing.

In addition to the new shelter model at Orion Center, YouthCare is also expanding the day services at Jackson Street—YouthCare’s shelter for young adults in south Seattle. Jackson Street now offers day services seven days a week, where young people can come in to eat, rest, shower, or meet with their case manager. YouthCare is particularly excited to expand Jackson Street as we work to address the inequities across our city related to access and services.



OUR 2018 LUNCHEON

The 33rd Annual YouthCare Luncheon was a huge success—and raised more than \$765,000 for homeless youth. Thanks to our generous sponsors, table captains, and donors in the Challenge Pool, all donations go directly to YouthCare’s programs.

Did you know?

In a national study, over

90% OF HOMELESS YOUTH report family conflict, and 1/4 suffer from abuse or neglect.

source: tinyurl.com/ydz22oau

BOLD ADVOCATES FOR YOUTH

YouthCare is excited to share our new Mission, Vision, and Values statements. The last time these guiding statements were edited was 2010. Much has changed for YouthCare, the young people we serve, and our community since that time. We’re enhancing our strength, our tenacity, and our commitment to providing consistently excellent services, as well as openly naming and working to dismantle the institutional barriers and injustices that impact the youth we serve. We are not done with our work—but we are proud to officially put these updates into the fabric of our organization, our daily actions, and our decisions. To view our vision and values statements, [visit youthcare.org/mission](https://youthcare.org/mission)

OUR MISSION

YouthCare works to end youth homelessness and to ensure that young people are valued for who they are and empowered to achieve their potential.

VISIT [YOUTHCARE.ORG](https://youthcare.org)
To learn more and get involved:
► [Donate](#) ► [Volunteer](#) ► [Advocate](#)
Reach us at info@youthcare.org

Special thanks TO OUR 2018 LUNCHEON SPONSORS

PRESENTING SPONSOR
Ben Bridge

PARTNER SPONSORS
Expedia Inc.
Intersection
Laird Norton Company
Metzler Real Estate
Microsoft
Starbucks Coffee Company
Vulcan Inc.

COMMUNITY SPONSORS
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
The Boeing Company
HomeStreet Bank
Kaiser Permanente
MCSB, Inc.
Nintendo of America, Inc.
Oak View Group
Schwabe, Williamson & Wyatt
SME, Inc. of Seattle
SpringHill Suites Seattle

PATRON SPONSORS
Bartell Drugs
Cardea
Cornerstone Home Lending
Filter, LLC
Fox Rothschild, LLP
Hudson Group
Indigo Real Estate
Meridian Capital, LLC
One Eighty Foundation
Propel Insurance
Room & Board
Seattle Cancer Care Alliance
Seattle Children’s
USI Kibble & Prentice
UW Medicine

ADVOCATE SPONSORS
evo
NWG Real Estate
Planned Parenthood
RW Anderson Homes
RW Anderson Services
Seattle Credit Union