

YOUTH
STORY:*You Helped Benjamin Build His Future*

Benjamin had been living in YouthCare housing programs, building the skills and confidence to gain long-term stability. He soon realized that he needed to continue his education to qualify for job opportunities that would pay a living wage. He enrolled in YouthCare's GED program as a first step.

At first, his attendance in class was spotty and he struggled with his schoolwork. But a big transformation was on the horizon.

He signed up for YouthCare's Tile Project in addition to his GED work. In the Tile Project, young people spend eight weeks learning essential skills for employment, including working with colleagues and a supervisor, project and time management, navigating setbacks, and celebrating successes while creating amazing pieces of art.

After being in a supportive environment that helped Benjamin build confidence as a student, and with lots of engagement from his case manager, things started to change. He finally felt stable enough to set bigger and bolder goals for himself.

After graduating from the Tile Project, Benjamin worked at multiple internships—further building employment skills and relationships in the community. He continued to work hard in the GED classroom and began to talk about wanting to go to college after getting his GED.

The GED test has become increasingly difficult in recent years—much more like the SAT. This is a hurdle, particularly for students who have been out of school for longer periods of time. One by one, Benjamin passed the first three of the four required GED tests. The final math portion of the GED was proving to be a challenge.

He put in countless hours of one-on-one work with GED staff. His goal was to finish before the June graduation, so the March GED test would be his last chance to pass before the end of the school year. Benjamin was feeling down about his chances

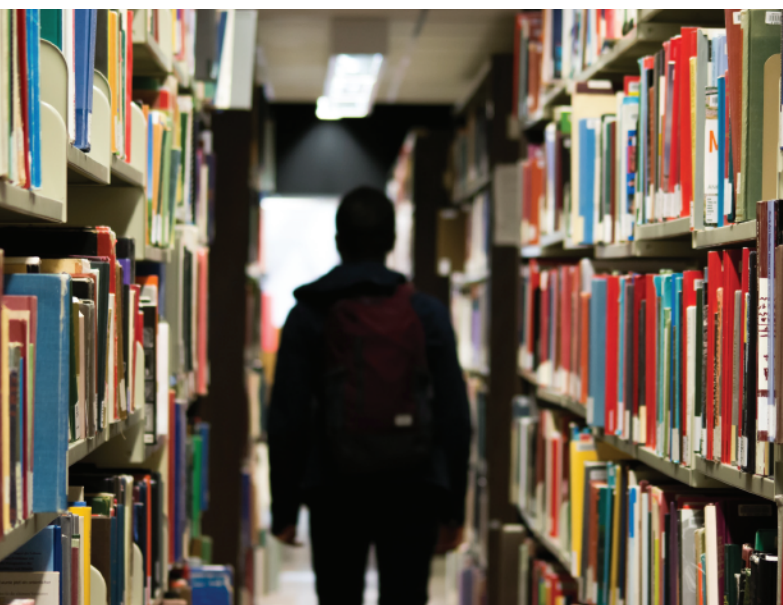


of accomplishing that goal, but the GED team continued to work with him day-in and day-out, providing him with tutoring and therapeutic support, and connecting him to much-needed resources along his journey.

To his surprise, Benjamin passed his math test and earned his GED in June!

Nathan, the Education Program Supervisor, said, "It was so incredible to get to see Benjamin accomplish this goal after he worked so long and hard. All the YouthCare staff he worked with are so proud of him!"

Benjamin has been over the moon, happier than staff have ever seen him. **He has relished getting to share the good news with all the YouthCare staff he's worked with over the years.** He plans on enrolling at Seattle Central College in September to begin taking classes toward an Associate Degree—just for starters. Benjamin is currently working full-time and preparing for his first day of college. It is a lot to juggle at once, but we have no doubt that this resilient young man is ready for great success with all of his goals! We look forward to seeing what the next chapter has in store for Benjamin.



“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

– Nelson Mandela

Help youth get ready for the new school year.

Your donation of school supplies helps homeless youth in our care feel prepared and excited for their first day. Opening a new backpack or using a gift card to purchase special clothing means new possibilities and room to dream—something all youth deserve.

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

- Backpacks & messenger bags
- Alarm clocks & day planners
- New underwear & boxers
- Scientific & graphing calculators
- Gift cards (Fred Meyer, Target, Amazon, etc.)
- Art supplies
- Nonperishable food

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.

King County Safe Place Receives National Award

The King County Safe Place program was recently awarded the 2018 Model Program Award by National Safe Place! This award recognizes agencies that have developed creative and innovative ways to improve service delivery to youth and their families.

The King County Safe Place program is a formal partnership between YouthCare and Friends of Youth and follows a deeply collaborative model. The two dedicated Safe Place staff, Benjamin Warren from YouthCare and Bryan Thompson from Friends of Youth, work together to coordinate and serve all aspects of the program. **Benjamin and Bryan go above and beyond to meet the needs of young people and the program.** King County Safe Place is a success because of them and their efforts! Here's a photo of Benjamin and Bryan receiving the award at the National Safe Place Conference.



Street Arts: Building Inclusion & Culture

Street Arts is an arts and culture collective at YouthCare designed for youth of color. The collective provides weekly workshops, exercises, and discussions about the importance of cultural differences, intersections, and artistic expression. Through these activities, youth can engage and create alongside peers and staff to share personal backgrounds and identity.

The collective also seeks to make YouthCare's engagement centers feel inclusive by creating unique cultural works of art to decorate the walls.



The collective promotes individual expression through many forms of art: large scale mural painting, sculpture and installation, writing, spoken word, chapbooks, music, performance, and more.

Save the date

**FOR OUR
SPRING LUNCHEON!**

**Friday, March 22, 2019
at The Westin Seattle.**

For information about sponsorship opportunities or hosting a table, please contact Gabbi at gabbi.sawrey@youthcare.org



YouthCare and OVG Create Pathways for Youth



YouthCare is honored to be included as a community giving partner in Oak View Group's (OVG) plans to redevelop Seattle's beloved Key Arena. While the fine details are still being worked out, the collaboration will focus on employment and leadership opportunities for young people, diverse ways to share our mission with arena guests, and a generous financial commitment from OVG of \$10 Million (\$500,000 annually for 20 years) to ensure for vital programming for homeless youth in our community.

Homeless youth often talk about feeling invisible, and this project is a chance for them to directly participate in one of the most visible civic projects in a generation.

We'll keep you posted when we have more news to share!

A NOTE FROM *Melinda*



While filled with love, my family struggled while I was growing up. The stress of scarcity impacted each of us differently. For me, I dove headfirst into school. There was comfort in school days filled with new information, inspiring teachers, and books telling me about places I'd never been, people I'd never met, or ideas that had never crossed my mind. And there was a freedom in learning—it didn't matter who you were, where you came from, or what you were wearing. Education gave me an opportunity to move forward and build a future. Education transformed me.

As we welcome the return of the school year, I know that homeless young people have that same desire to learn and grow. But this excitement is often muted by worries about balancing a job while trying to find stable housing, or having enough school supplies and homework support. I am also reminded that, together, we can ensure that all young people reach their educational goals that speak to their strengths, leverage their curiosities, and offer a chance to grow and thrive. I thank you for all the countless ways you support the power of education and never, ever give up hope.

My best,

Melinda Giovengo, PhD
CEO

Did you know?

Of the 1,500+ homeless youth and young adults in King County, approximately:



1/3

IDENTIFY AS LGBTQ+
many are kicked out for coming out

3 of 5

ARE YOUTH OF COLOR
systemic racism denies people of color equal access to housing and income

Stay in touch!

**VISIT
YOUTHCARE.ORG**

**To learn more and
get involved:**

- **Donate**
- **Volunteer**
- **Advocate**

Reach us at info@youthcare.org