

# YOUTH CARE

Homeless youth ➤ Off the streets ➤ Preparing for life

2500 NE 54th St. Seattle, WA 98105

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## A BRIGHTER FUTURE STARTS WITH THE BASICS.

### For homeless youth, a brighter future starts with the basics.

At YouthCare, the pathway to a brighter future is different for every young person we meet. Many are working hard to get their high school diploma or very first job, and building trusting relationships with staff to help them move toward independence and stability. Yet no matter where youth are in that journey, the basics—a warm jacket, a razor, or a backpack—go a long way to get them there.

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

- Gift cards (Amazon, Visa, Fred Meyer, Target, Safeway) – *Gift cards are urgently needed! These offer flexibility to support young people's unique needs!*
- Backpacks & school supplies
- New underwear
- Art supplies
- Housewares & small kitchen appliances
- Hygiene items (deodorant, razors, ethnic hair products)

### For more, visit [youthcare.org/what-we-need-now](https://youthcare.org/what-we-need-now)

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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](https://youthcare.org), or visit our website to purchase items from YouthCare's online wish list on Amazon.com. For more information, contact us at (206) 204-1404 or [donations@youthcare.org](mailto:donations@youthcare.org).

## YOUTH STORY

## Finding Her Voice Through Art: Nia's Story

The first day Nia started YouthCare's Tile Project, she barely spoke a word.

Growing up, Nia's family moved often, finding sporadic shelter in rooms with relatives. Tensions rose with every move and shouting matches were constant. When everything came to a boil, Nia found it best to keep silent. She became more and more withdrawn as she got older, losing confidence in herself and her voice.

***Being invisible felt like a relief for Nia: a momentary escape from the chaos at home.***

By the time she was a young adult, Nia had developed a fear of speaking. When a friend told her about YouthCare's Tile Project, she was terrified. Living in a transitional housing program in South King County, she would also have to travel over an hour by bus to attend class. **But Nia wanted to take steps to find a job and support herself.** So, she took a deep breath and decided to give it a shot.

**The Tile Project is a pre-employment program that helps young people learn key job readiness skills. For eight weeks, youth learn to work collaboratively on a team, develop their resumes, and practice healthy ways to express themselves through creative pieces of art.**

Nia loved learning new ceramic techniques and always arrived on time for class. The passion she gained for learning a new craft was clear—but when it came to group activities in the classroom, Nia had a difficult time. She told staff that she didn't like being around people she didn't know; she only wanted to work independently.

Halfway through the program, youth were given the opportunity to sell their artwork at a local giving fair. Staff asked Nia if she was interested in attending, and she cautiously agreed. But, right before the fair, Nia said she didn't feel comfortable talking to any of the customers and asked to help with paperwork at the event instead.

When the big day came, shoppers poured into the fair, and Nia worked the booth that morning with support from YouthCare



Career Coordinator, Kate. Onlookers approached Nia with questions about the program and art pieces for sale. Each time, Nia turned to Kate to whisper the answers in her ear, and Kate repeated the answers out loud.

At one point during the fair, Nia was left alone for a moment. When a customer came up to ask a question, Nia reluctantly answered. Soon after, another customer approached the booth. When Kate returned to her side, Nia fought back her fears and answered their questions on her own.

***Nia's confidence grew with every interaction. By the end of the day, she was beaming.***

**"I was so impressed by Nia. She really loved explaining to customers how to glaze and fire ceramic," said Kate. "The artwork she sold was the biggest sale of the day!"**

That day at the fair was life-changing for Nia. She discovered that she truly enjoyed talking to others—especially about art! With continued support from staff to build communication skills and confidence, Nia completed the Tile Project with flying colors. Soon after, she enrolled in YouthCare's Barista and Customer Service Training Program with her sights set on obtaining her first job in customer service. She's ready to take on her next challenge, and we couldn't be more excited for her!



Employment Training: Celebrating Success

Some of our favorite times of the year are when we get to celebrate young people’s success. YouthCare honors the completion of each employment training program with a graduation ceremony that highlights young people’s strengths as both individuals and as a cohort. Here are some of our most recent celebrations:

BARISTA GRADUATION

The Barista Employment Training and Customer Service Program is an eight-week program run in partnership with FareStart. At the beginning of each cohort, the participants work together to pick a name to represent their team. Our most recent cohort, the Suprema Creamas, had their graduation ceremony at the Orion Center.



*“I can’t believe just eight weeks ago, I didn’t even know what a latte was,” said one student. “But in the course of eight weeks, I learned how to make everything from an Italian soda to a caramel macchiato.”*



YOUTHGROW GRADUATION

YouthGrow is an eight-week program that teaches young people gardening, landscaping, and food production skills while they work on completing their high school diploma. The recent graduates gained invaluable skills in the program to help them grow their futures, including time management, communication, and teamwork. Some discovered a new passion for gardening—with plans to continue YouthGrow in the summer where they’ll have the opportunity to market and sell harvested produce at the Columbia City Farmers Market.

*“This program gave me a hobby,” said one student. “I’m going to start my own garden one day.”*

YOUTHBUILD EXHIBITION DAY

YouthBuild is a six-month, pre-apprenticeship program for young people interested in pursuing a career in the construction trades. YouthBuild celebrates the halfway mark of the program with a student-led exhibition day. During the most recent exhibition, young people gave guests a tour of the facility, trained them to paint tiny houses, and answered questions on a student panel. It was clear to see their growth and leadership—we can’t wait to watch them graduate in June!

*“When I came to YouthBuild, people said they wanted to help me. And they actually did, instead of just saying it. That was new for me. It made me want to do better for myself.”*



Make sure to check out the event calendar on our website to attend an employment training graduation!

In case you missed it...

Over forty years ago, YouthCare’s founders responded to a calling to serve homeless youth in their neighborhood. **Fast forward to today, and YouthCare is building on its mission to end youth homelessness with boldness and intention—starting with a new strategic plan and website.**

NEW WEBSITE

Completed this January, the website is highly accessible and features a clean and simple design. Some of the new additions include:

- A YouthCare blog that highlights youth stories, program updates, and agency news.
- An events calendar that includes upcoming YouthCare-related events, community happenings, and social justice events recommended by YouthCare’s Cultural Impact Committee.
- An advocacy tab that features YouthCare’s state and federal legislative agendas as well as our policy endorsements and public statements.
- An impact page that showcases data regarding YouthCare’s services and outcomes.



NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

YouthCare recently finalized a robust, three-year strategic plan, grounded in feedback from our young people and dedicated staff. **The new plan pushes YouthCare to expand our programming and increase the excellence of our services.** It also updates our daily systems of operation so we can report back on the positive change we have achieved, together, with young people. The plan holds YouthCare accountable to—and measures success by—helping young people **maintain four key pillars of stability** one year after exiting from services:



1. WELLNESS
2. HOUSING STABILITY
3. FINANCIAL STABILITY
4. COMMUNITY

Check out our website to read our 2019-2022 Strategic Plan!

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

2019 LUNCHEON

**Our 34th Annual Luncheon was incredible. Together, we raised more than \$800,000 for homeless youth.**

Thanks to our generous sponsors, table captains, and Challenge Pool donors, all donations go directly into YouthCare programs.

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