

Seating still available for 8th annual CYS Have a Heart for Kids Breakfast



Where: Red Lion Hotel, 2310 Evergreen Park Drive, near the Thurston County Courthouse

When: Thursday, Feb. 25, 7:15 to 8:30 a.m.

What it does: Raises critical funds to help support CYS youth program and services

Cost: Breakfast is complimentary; guests are invited to make individual donations

Why attend: Because investing in youth is an investment in our future, and it's everyone's responsibility!

To learn more, to reserve seats or to donate if you can't attend, contact:

Susan Alexander, (360) 943-0780 ext. 116 OR salexander@communityyouthservices.org

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Jim Theofelis



Founder and executive director of The Mockingbird Society, Seattle, which each day advocates for 14,000 youth in Washington's foster care system.

ALSO: Hear inspiring, real-life stories from several CYS participants who have overcome personal challenges and made positive changes in their lives!



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YouthBuild Links Youth to Their Future

Last fall, they were close to falling off any road to success. All were low-income high school dropouts. About half had been juvenile offenders. Some had bounced around the foster-care system without success. Some were homeless.

Today, they are focused, driven toward hard work that earns them a paycheck, and setting their sights on careers, college, or both.

"Look at the kids in this program," said Jared Thomas, 19. "Think about where we'd be if not here. We'd be running the streets, getting into trouble. Now we're motivated. We've learned from our mistakes and we're going to do something with ourselves," he added.

Twenty-seven youth now participate in YouthBuild, a 20-year-old federal program operating in 45 states. Last



Jared Thomas



Tanya Rosario

summer, after receiving a three-year, \$980,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Labor, CYS partnered with New Market Vocational Skills Center to launch its new program, one of nine now in the state.

"We teach construction as a vehicle to prepare kids to become employable," said New Market construction instructor Tim Stender. "Our

expectation isn't necessarily that they go into the construction field, but they learn to be on-time, how to dress appropriately, what it feels like to earn a paycheck, all while they're working toward their high school diplomas or GEDs. All of those things make them good employees," Tim added.

Participants spend part of each school day in the classroom, learning basic academic as well as leadership skills, said Beth Meyer, CYS YouthBuild program director. The rest of their time, they're hammering nails, measuring, dry walling, painting—even learning plumbing and carpentry. The group has focused on several Habitat for

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Andrea Cobb (left) of New Market joins Jazmene Scott and Hannah Franks of CYS

Making Her Voice Heard

Jazmene Scott, a participant in CYS' Youth Employment Services program, testified last month to the House Education Committee about the importance of dropout prevention. Jazmene, on her way to being a certified nurse assistant, was a high school dropout before her involvement with CYS and New Market Vocational Skills Center. A young mother and former foster-care child, Jazmene enjoys her job at Providence St. Peters Hospital.

Paperless? You decide!

Even though Kermit sings "It's not easy being green," that doesn't mean we shouldn't try! As part of our effort to protect the environment and keep costs down, CYS is moving toward an electronic newsletter to replace our printed, paper one.



To make that happen, we need YOUR input AND your E-MAIL ADDRESS (which we will *not share*).

Please send your email address to:

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Community Youth Services
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Packing up a BIG donation!

Garden Courte Memory Care Community held a collection and donated a large van full of suitcases, backpacks, duffel bags and other travel carriers to CYS in mid-January. Their goal was to benefit homeless CYS participants who might have only grocery sacks or plastic bags in which to carry their belongings from place to place. Five CYS program managers were able to claim as many suitcases as they could load into their cars before handing them over to grateful program participants. "We're so fortunate to have community partners like Garden Courte thinking of our kids," said **Susan Alexander**, CYS development director. "It does take a village, and the residents and friends from Garden Courte both understand and embody that philosophy."



Sherry Gillette, Garden Courte activity director, helps unload nearly 150 donated suitcases intended for transient youth in our community.

Free Health Clinic Opens Doors to Street Youth

When a free medical clinic closed recently in Thurston County, many youth were left with few alternatives.

But CYS and **Sea Mar Community Health Centers** decided to combine forces, and now a free, weekly medical clinic is staffed on the fourth floor of CYS.

Health professionals offer female exams, testing for sexu-



ally transmitted diseases, birth-control assistance, pregnancy testing and treatment for illness.

"The clinic is a wonderful new resource where youth can be comfortable seeking help," said **Tasha Church**, Rosie's Place program director.

Each week through the chillier winter months, more and more youth have taken advantage of the clinic, with about a dozen seeking help on any given Wednesday.

"We are delighted to add this new clinic to the list of services we can offer vulnerable youth," said CYS director **Charles Shelan**. "Kids need to know we are there for them."

her mother died. "I had to grow up fast," she remembers.

KC Wood, 18, said he "hated normal high school, everything about it." The YouthBuild program has led him to an interest in fire-fighting or paramedic training. "There's a lot of motivation to get your stuff done, especially since we get paid at the

end of the month," he said.

CYS' Beth Meyer said she looks forward to watching the program grow and develop through the collaboration with New Market. "It's been amazing to work with these young people!" she said.



YouthBuild

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Humanity sites near Roosevelt Elementary School in Olympia.

"I like the whole construction part," said 21-year-old Tanya Rosario, who was forced to leave school and get a job several years ago after



SNAPSHOTS: Who and What's New at CYS

CYS has welcomed several new staff members recently.

Among them is **Mark Schindler**, human resources manager and volunteer coordinator, who previously worked for nine years with JumpStart, a.k.a. Faith Homes in Tacoma. A native of Seattle who was raised in Auburn, Mark now lives in the city of Pacific with his wife, Alisa, and daughters Jocelyn, 3, and Kaitlyn, 1.

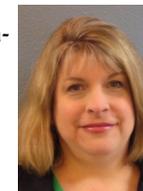


Trudy Soucoup joins CYS in the new position of organizational development manager. Trudy has worked locally with Wolf Haven International and Harlequin Productions in fund raising and marketing. She moved to Olympia in 2000, from a position at the College of Notre Dame in Belmont, California. In May, Trudy will earn her master's degree in organizational leadership from Chapman University.



Joining the development and community relations team is **Barbara Wakefield**, resource development associate. Barb spent 20 years as a newspaper journalist in Lexington, Kentucky before moving here 11 years ago. Husband Jerry is managing editor at The Olympian; son Jonathan attends the University of British Columbia and daughter Emily is a student at Washington Middle School.

A warm welcome to all new CYS staff!



Beth Meyer, former AmeriCorps director at CYS, now leads the CareerTrek/ Youth Employment Services department as program director.

On The Hill: An alumnus of CYS' Haven House crisis shelter and of its Independent Living Skills program is now busy helping to craft changes that will help foster children in years to come.

Alum **Sam Evans**, now the Mockingbird Society chapter leader and a CYS Peer to Peer Mentor, is on a state panel working on the Accountability in Child Welfare Act (2106) legislation, which will significantly change how the foster care system works in the state.

CYS participants are also making their voices heard this legislative session during Youth Advocacy Day, set for Feb. 19. They will be advocating for programs that provide safe housing for runaways, homeless youth and those aging out of the foster care system.

Green thumbs: At Haven House, young people planted a vegetable garden last summer and enjoyed the fruits (and veggies) of their labor into the fall.

This spring, Haven House youth will be busy planting some of the 200 pine and fir seedlings that they have been nurturing since last year. The trees are set to beautify the Woodland Park Trail. Volunteers for the project are welcome!



MARK YOUR CALENDAR! CYS marks 40 years @ April 23 Open House, 3-5 pm!