

NEWSLETTER



YOUTH ON THEIR OWN

Educating homeless teens. Investing in Tucson's future.



SUCCESS STORY!

Laurie Hicks, 32, took the position of Spa Director at Omni Tucson National Golf Resort & Spa in March 2007. The 1993 Amphi High School graduate holds a Bachelors Degree in Hotel and Restaurant Management from Northern Arizona University. "You need to love what you do," she stated. One look around and it is apparent that she enjoys the many facets of her work... the retail shop is attractive, the spa inviting; the fitness

classes offer a real work out, while the aestheticians and personal trainers provide an exceptional experience for each guest.

Laurie oversees 26 employees of varying ages. She earned the respect of older employees by repeatedly displaying sound judgment in a professional manner, and she won the hearts of her younger charges. "They call me mom," she noted, smiling. A number of high school students assist at the front desk, and Laurie keeps a close eye on them – checking their grades to make certain they are balancing their studies with work.

Originally from New York, Laurie moved to Arizona in fourth grade with her mother and siblings. She did not have contact with her biological father after her parents divorced when she was four years old. Home became an unstable place when her mother remarried. Laurie's step-father, an alcoholic, was verbally and emotionally abusive. She was only 15 years old when she left home to live with friends. Although still attending school and working, she had no clothes or food. She either walked or took the bus as a means of transportation. Laurie dropped out the second semester of her junior year of high school after her mother divorced her step-father. Laurie's mom was a "stay-at-home" mom and totally unprepared for work. "I took on a parental role," she stated. She also stepped in to raise her siblings as her mother rebuilt her life.

Laurie went back to school and enrolled in YOTO. She received much needed support, which included basic needs and financial assistance as well as guidance. She met a role model: Nancy Strauss, a YOTO volunteer at Amphi. She remembers Nancy's motivational words of wisdom – that Laurie could do whatever she wanted to do.

"Laurie's situation is one that we see with many YOTO students. Although she initiated the move out on her own, it was so she could be safe," said Mary Gruensfelder-Cox, YOTO Executive Director. "There are times when students are temporarily unaccompanied when a parent is struggling. We are delighted when they can reunite and are happy that we helped."

Today, Laurie can see the whole picture and how much her mother struggled. "I have an excellent mom," she said with pride. Her mom has a wonderful position and both sisters are also very successful. The family is close once again. "I appreciate everything I have, and I don't think about what was – no regrets."

SAVE THE DATE!

"Philanthropy With Phlavor" Pastiche Modern Eatery

The entire month of June 2008

Monday – Friday, 11:30 am to midnight
Saturday and Sunday, 4:30 pm to midnight
3025 N. Campbell Road

Patische Modern Eatery will donate 5% of every purchase to your favorite designated charity: YOTO!

For more information, visit www.pasticheme.com, email info@PasticheME.com, or call 325.3333.

Arizona Roofing Contractors Association

"Raising the Roof for YOTO"

5th Annual Charity Bowling Tournament

Saturday, June 28, 2008

Noon - 4 pm (Registration at 11:00 am)
Golden Pin Lanes – 1010 W. Miracle Mile in Tucson
Team registration fee \$350 (six bowlers per team)

To register call 520.405.3222 or 520.631.7931

Participants receive three games of tournament bowling, shoe rental, lunch, registration bag filled with fun goodies, event T-shirt, and a chance to win big prizes!

Event Theme: "Wild Wild West" Prizes will be awarded for the best team costume and best team theme.

INSIDE

Top of the Town '08

for the benefit of YOUTH ON THEIR OWN

Turn to pages 4 - 7 for post-event details.





A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The school year at Youth On Their Own is always a whirlwind of activity, but shortly after the winter holidays, the pace multiplies exponentially as we ramp-up for the annual Top of the Town gala in March and sustain the speed through the May and June graduations. This period is also an amazingly inspiring time, one that brings into focus the reasons why we do what we do to support homeless youth in their quest to graduate from high school.

Within the past month, YOTO staff members have attended numerous graduation ceremonies at local schools. Often, we are the only ones besides school officials present to cheer for the graduating YOTO students and we arrive, cameras in hand, to celebrate their accomplishments. As they walk across the stage and receive their diplomas, we know how hard they had to work to overcome their life situations and keep their eyes on the goal of graduating. Like many of the moms and dads seated near us, we shed a few tears and are grateful that we had the privilege of serving these most incredible young people.

What YOTO students cannot really know is how the lone YOTO staffer at their graduation ceremony represents an incredible web of support that has embraced them throughout their high school experience. Staff, board members, volunteers, school liaisons, collaborating agency personnel, and the hundreds of donors who make YOTO viable, all contribute mightily to the agency's mission of providing financial assistance, basic needs and guidance to "our" kids.

A year ago, during the strategic planning process, YOTO staff and board pledged to strengthen relationships with other area service providers in order to prevent duplication of effort and to capitalize on the expertise of other agencies. This was both a fiscal issue (existing funding will go further when we partner with other agencies) and an acknowledgment that homeless students often have multiple challenges that cannot be dealt with in the best way by one organization. I am most grateful for four particular partner agencies with which YOTO worked closely this year and look forward to a continued alliance: Open Inn, Our Family Services/Teens in Transition, The Community Food Bank, and Touch Point Connection. You can read more about Touch Point Connection on page 10.

As we close out the 2007-08 school year and get a brief breather before launching into the 2008-09 school year, I thank each and every one of you who enabled YOTO to sustain and to enrich its support of homeless youth. Truly, with you behind them, they are not alone!

In service to Tucson's youth,
Mary Gruensfelder-Cox, MPA
 Executive Director

YOTO Communications

The quarterly YOTO newsletter has grown both in scope and pages over the past year. We enjoy bringing YOTO supporters the latest in student and organization news, and keeping you informed on upcoming legislative action that may affect homeless and unaccompanied youth.

The Winter and the current Spring issues are noticeably lengthy as we are now in a position to recognize and thank individual donors on a regular basis for their generosity. This Spring's issue also includes both honoraria and memorials received July 1, 2007 through December 31, 2007. Whew! Communications were in a "catch up" mode over the past year as policies were created and implemented to deliver information and donor recognition in a timely, consistent manner. In the future, all contributors – as well as those honored and remembered by the gifts of others – will be recognized in print six months post-contribution. Great care is taken in preparing donor listings, but if your name is omitted, in error, or if your recognition preference changes, please accept our apology and contact us so we may immediately update our records.

Upcoming Communications

Summer '08

- Staff preparations to serve students in the 2008 – 2009 academic year
- No donor listings

Fall '08

- Student Graduations, 2007 - 2008
- Program and Service Stats, 2007 – 2008
- Student Holiday Party '08 Preview
- Donor Recognition, January 1, 2008 – June 30, 2008
- Honorariums/Memorials, January 1, 2008 – June 30, 2008

Winter '09

- 2007 – 2008 Annual Report Audited Financials Bar Charts

- Student Holiday Party '08 Review
- Top of the Town '09 Preview
- Donor Recognition, July 1, 2008 – December 31, 2008
- Honorariums/Memorials, July 1, 2008 – December 31, 2008

Spring '09

- Top of the Town '09 Review
- Donor Recognition, January 1, 2009 – June 30, 2009
- Honorariums/Memorials, January 1, 2009 – June 30, 2009

Summer '09

- Staff preparations to serve students in the 2009 – 2010 academic year
- No donor listings



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

It has become almost a cliché to refer to supporting a non-profit with volunteer time or charitable contributions as an “investment.” By using the term, we convey that the application of time, talent or gifts of support will ultimately pay off in something positive – the “return” on our investment.

Unlike investments in a system like the stock market, we tend to think of the return on a charitable investment as being external to ourselves. Indeed, supporting Youth On Their Own will provide a return for the homeless and unaccompanied students served by the agency. By graduating from high school with YOTO’s assistance, they will likely be more economically independent, productive, and successful over their lifetimes. Yet, as you can see in the box below, there is a tremendous benefit to the society at-large and, therefore, to each one of us.

I like knowing that the time and dollars that I contribute to YOTO are an investment in individual kids who will be less likely to be unemployed, incarcerated, on public assistance, or involved in self-destructive behavior over their lifetimes. While I know that my personal efforts might not reverse the overall dropout problem, it gratifies me to know that I can join with others like you to affect a part of the situation in our own community.

Still, as with many of you, my connection with YOTO does not originate in my head, as would most investment decisions. It starts and ends with my heart. The “glue” that continues to keep me “stuck” to YOTO is the kids and I, along with nearly 400 others, were privileged to have that connection reinforced by the student speakers at this year’s Top of the Town event on March 7. Over and over again, I heard from event guests who told me how they were amazed, humbled, and inspired by the courage and tenaciousness of these homeless students. They were bowled over by the fact that these kids represented hundreds of students served by YOTO each year.

As we close out one academic year and head into another, I extend my most sincere thanks to all who “invested” in YOTO and its students this year and invite you to remain involved in supporting this effective and much-needed resource in our community.

Regards,
Marian Canrad LaLande, President
YOTO Board of Directors

Fast Facts

- Dropouts contribute disproportionately to the unemployment rate. In 2001, 55 percent of young adult dropouts were employed, compared to 74 percent of high-school graduates and 87 percent of college graduates.
- Dropouts contribute to state and federal tax coffers at about one-half the rate of high-school graduates. Over a working lifetime, a dropout will contribute about \$60,000 less.
- The 23 million high-school dropouts aged 18-67 will contribute roughly \$50 billion less annually in state and federal taxes.
- Studies suggest the United States would save \$41.8 billion in health care costs if the 600,000 young people who dropped out in 2004 were to complete one additional year of education.
- If 33 percent of dropouts graduated from high school, the federal government would save \$10.8 billion each year in food stamps, housing assistance, and temporary assistance for needy families.

Source: American Youth Policy Forum, “Whatever It Takes: How Twelve Communities Are Reconnecting Out-of-School Youth...” “The Dropout Problem in Numbers” (PDF).

CHARITABLE GIVING TAX-TIP: CHARITABLE BEQUEST

The term “charitable bequest” is used to describe anything given to charity from an estate through a will. An “estate” is any property, money or personal belongings that an individual may have at the time of his or her death. Most people leave an estate when they die, even though they may not have a great deal of wealth. Even an individual with a small estate can arrange to leave a charitable bequest.

There are several different ways to bequeath a gift from an estate:

- Set aside a specific dollar amount
- Leave a percentage of the estate
- Leave any assets left over after loved ones have been provided for

By Youth On Their Own Board of Directors policy, and unless otherwise specified, funding from bequests is invested and provides operating income in addition to ensuring that YOTO can maintain service effectiveness during uncertain economic circumstances.

Those wishing to restrict their bequest to a particular program or purpose at YOTO should contact the Executive Director to discuss available options.

The following is an example of language that sets aside a specific dollar amount for use where the need is greatest:

I give, devise, and bequeath to Youth On Their Own, Tucson, Arizona the sum of \$_____ for its general purposes.*

* This is not intended to be financial or legal advice



★ Top of the Town '08 for the benefit of YOUTH ON THEIR OWN

Memorable, emotional, inspirational, and just plain fun are four words that sum up the 13th Annual Top of the Town fundraising gala held on March 7 at Loews Ventana Canyon Resort. Approximately 400 guests gathered to raise funds for core services that support YOTO students as they pursue their high school diplomas. The event raised over \$135,000 in proceeds from sponsorships, ticket sales, the silent and live auction, a fun game of chance called "Heads or Tails," the "Support Our Students 2008 Campaign, and additional event contributions. The evening featured an auction and dinner, a number of poignant student presentations, the debut of the new agency video, and dancing the night away to the fantastic live performance of "The Desert Cadillacs." Michael J. Hanson, YOTO board member, was honored for his leadership and ongoing support.

With gratitude, we acknowledge event guests, sponsors, service donors, auction donors, and contributors for making this evening a success! With heartfelt appreciation, we recognize and thank a cadre of dedicated team leaders and volunteers who worked tirelessly to bring guests a special evening and YOTO students needed support.



SPECIAL KUDOS

- Trylla Dole
- Kathryn Draman (in memoriam)
- Nancy Hannan
- Laurie Hicks
- Inglis Florists

International Media Broadcasting
Nancy Montoya, Kirt Ijams & Digital
Futures students, Amphi High School

J.C. Penney & Company

- Jones Photo
- Mary Kearney
- Shirley Killian
- Jennifer Lujan
- Patty McGuire
- Chris Norwood
- Jennifer Reynard
- The Desert Cadillacs
- Craig Wunderlich

Photography courtesy of
Robin Stancliff Photography



EVENT SPONSORS

Platinum Level Sponsor

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Allegra Print & Imaging

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Robin Stancliff Photography

TOP OF THE TOWN LEADERSHIP TEAM '08

Barbara Bardach, Chair

Gina Babunovic, Communications

Sue Brooks - Marathon, Advisor

Maria Castro, Operations

Dianna Coxhead, Acquisitions

Mary Gruensfelder-Cox, Executive Director

Meredith Moore, Student Liaison

Mary Stewart, Logistics

Pat Sturmon, Outreach

Patti Yenerich, Sponsorships & Board Liaison

VOLUNTEERS

Kristy Becko-Whisenant, Phyllis Bement,

Diana Boros, Pam Burke, Rebecca Burns,

Peggy Craig, Shirlee Finney, Carol Fiore,

Gwen Gildea, Sally Goldberg, Kathi Heeter,

Isabel Hendricks, Alice Homstad, Beverly

Kasdan, Cristi Kittle, Bob and Karen

Kreiling, Debbie Kusumi, Joan Lee, Gary and

Kelly Loeb, Margaret Montgomery, Emily

Morrison, Gigi Parisi, Ed and Barbara Saffran,

Janis Salerno, Carrie Schocker, Diana Stocks,

Nancy Strauss, Eloise Williams



Top of the Town '08 - Continued



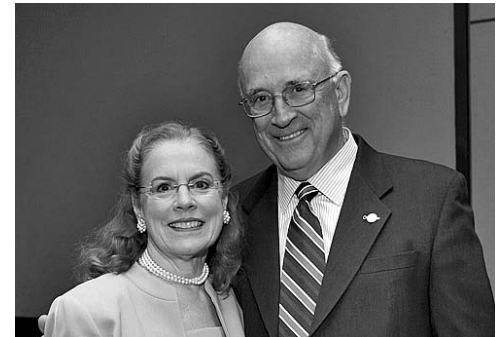
SOS Donors

Established at Top of the Town '06, SOS means "Support Our Students" and offers gala attendees the opportunity to provide students with support to ease the personal and financial burdens that are felt by homeless and unaccompanied youth as they pursue their high school diplomas. 100% of SOS contributions go directly to YOTO's core services: the Monthly Stipend Program and the Special Needs Program, which provides emergency funds for rent, utilities, food, medicines, and education-related needs.

SOS Program

Charter Members

Lance & Phyllis Bement
Bolchalk Frey Marketing,
Advertising & Public Relations
Alan Booth
Claudia Booth
Tomás & Wendy León
Tom & Mary Jane Lundsgaard
Richard P. & Patricia R. Mochel
Ronald & Mary Stewart
The Bruce T. Halle
Family Foundation



SOS '08 DONORS

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Suzanne Emam & Gabriel Chin
Dorothy H. Finley
Chuck & Sue Fish & The Rosewood
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Lorraine McPherson & Bruce Fulton
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Gus & "Dolly" Moreno
Emily & Ted Morrison
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Cyndy Neighbors

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Ursula F. Rodgers &
Lucine Dirtadian
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Jim & Kathy Wells
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Jane Wilson & Mark Rubin
Patti & Randy Yenerich
Gabe Zimmerman



Event donors are those who made contributions beyond the gala ticket cost or graciously donated even though they were unable to attend this year's event.

Individual Event Donors

Anonymous
 Barbara Atwood
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 Ed & Jill Bessey & Pfizer Foundation Matching Gift
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Event donations in honor of Michael J. & Christine Hanson

Donn S. Alpert
 J. Patrick Butler
 Bourn Companies (Don Bourn)
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 Sally Bengtson
 Bird's Nest Baking Company
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 Chris Bubany
 Mike & Pam Burke
 Calico Corners
 California Design Center/Studio C
 Canyon Ranch
 Cele Peterson's
 Chopped
 Helen Christoffel
 Bob Clark
 Dee Coleman
 Creations in Glass
 Creative Dance Arts
 Davis Dominquez Gallery
 Fred & Shari Dawson
 DeGrazia Gallery in the Sun
 Charles Deller
 Desert Art by Vanja
 Desert Design Cuts
 Desert Designs by Judy (Judy Utoft)
 Desert Oceans Art
 Designs by Jackie
 Steven & Nanette Didio
 Dream Dinners
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 Loews Ventana Canyon Resort
 M & I Bank

Madaras Gallery
 Manos Gallery
 Mark Hines Designs
 Michael Marks
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 Max Gallery
 Nikki Mehalic-Halle
 Meritage Homes
 Metal Arts Gallery
 Metropolitan Tucson Convention & Visitors Bureau, Southern AZ
 Attractions Alliance, & The Lodge at Ventana Canyon
 Miro's Dance Studio
 Margaret & C.P. Montgomery
 Victor Navarro-Sandoval
 Nelson Farms Inc.
 Omni Tucson National Golf Resort & Spa
 Oro Valley Heating & Cooling
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 Petroglyph Oil Paintings
 Philabaum Glass
 Piece By Piece
 Pima Air & Space Museum
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 Razmataz
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 Kay Womacks
 Craig Wunderlich
 Kenneth J. Yeaglin
 Patti & Randy Yenerich
 Zocalo Silver Design



★ YOTO COUNTS ITS BLESSINGS... ★ THANK YOU!



Newcomers Club of Tucson

In 2006, members of The Newcomers Club of Tucson voted to support YOTO students for two full years with their charitable fundraising efforts. Members raised nearly \$15,000, which supported student core services and also assisted with the Student Holiday Party. Club officers presented YOTO with a final donation at their year end meeting in May.

Pictured l to r: Andrea Goertz, Liz Pedersen, Gina Babunovic (YOTO), Shannon Dupper ('06 Marana High School, YOTO alum), and Nancy Norton.

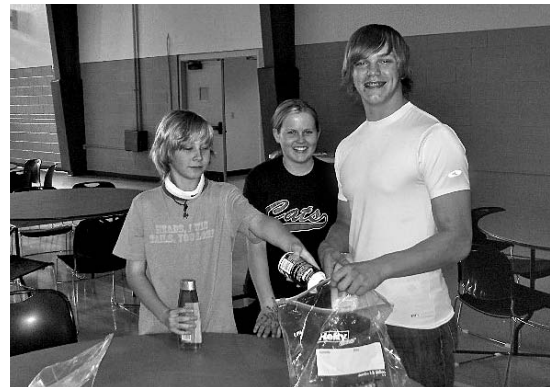
YOTO was the fortunate beneficiary of raffle proceeds raised during Sun Mechanical Contracting, Inc.'s Charity Golf Tournament held this April in Tubac. Event coordinators termed the 3rd Annual Tournament a "success!"



Resurrection Lutheran Church

Located in Oro Valley, the congregation of Resurrection Lutheran Church chose to support Youth On Their Own students in their mission work during the month of April. Church and youth group members donated personal toiletries to assemble 367 male and female hygiene kits and cash toward future Mini-Mall needs.

Coordinators Laura Lentner (l) and Jane Stash (r) collected items and delivered the kits to YOTO each Monday.



St. Alban's Episcopal Church

Gaeel Beaham and Cherill Huson of St. Alban's Episcopal Church pose behind over 51 grocery bags filled with food contributed by church members to stock the YOTO Mini-Mall Food Pantry.



Jay Taylor donated the proceeds from two performances of his one-man show entitled "Thankful for the Road." Held in mid-February at the Temple of Music and Art, his performance was a witty, delightful reflection on the Tucsonan's colorful life adventures.



Sam Levitz Furniture

With a little help from our friends – Frank Arrotta of Journal Broadcast Group, YOTO board member Michael Bolchak, and Eric Creson of Sam Levitz Furniture – Sam Levitz Furniture contributes furniture on an ongoing basis to assist students in setting up their households.

Robert Diaz (l) and Corey Young (r) deliver a new couch provided by Sam Levitz Furniture.



Cholla HS ROTC Donations

Cholla High School ROTC members called upon classmates for assistance and surprised YOTO with a truckload of clothing for YOTO students.

Pictured ROTC members: Crystal Riegen, Emma Rivera, Jessica Winright, Kayla Miranda, and Dan Zavala.

PROGRAM NOTES



Special Needs Funds are a form of financial support offered to YOTO students as emergencies arise. Assistance can come in the form of cash for rent and utilities or gift cards, vouchers, and referrals. Emergency funds for rent or utilities are offered one time per school semester to students who find themselves in a financial bind, thus preventing eviction from their living situation. YOTO staff review each request on a case-by-case basis. To provide insight on how YOTO approves a Special Needs Request, following are two examples submitted earlier in the school year in which each student was granted assistance:

Albert, a local high school student

In November 2007, YOTO referred Albert to Our Family Services' Teens In Transition (TNT) Program for case management. He was living with his girlfriend's family because, through no fault of his own, his grandparents told him he could no longer live with them. TNT worked with Albert and discovered that he also suffered from a chronic illness that required medication; he had no refills left on his prescription. Albert's doctor, a pediatrician, could no longer serve the young man since he had turned 19 years old. Albert had no healthcare; therefore, YOTO made an appointment with a volunteer physician so the student could receive a prescription written at no cost. YOTO filled out a Special Needs Request for the cost of the office visit as well as his prescription. Albert's TNT case manager worked on getting him onto an AHCCCS health plan so he will be covered upon high school graduation. Two weeks later, YOTO sent a referral to Leones de las Montañas Lions Club for Albert to receive a free eye exam and eye glasses. YOTO, his school counselor, and TNT continue to work with Albert as a team toward assisting him with his goal of high school graduation.

Crystal, a local high school student

Crystal's parents are each severe alcoholics, which created an unstable home life. She moved in with an aunt to find that many of the family's problems did not stop with her parents. Crystal took on parenting her younger sister as the situation at her parents' home worsened, and she had no choice but to drop out of school to take care of her sibling. A teacher referred Crystal to the YOTO program, stating, "She needs assistance to move herself out of the extended family setting to establish a stable, secure, and safe home life." Crystal requested financial support from YOTO. She receives passing grades in school and holds down two jobs: one job before school and a second job after school and on weekends. She can afford a studio apartment, pay her electric bill and her cell phone once she gets into an apartment. YOTO will provide financial support to assist Crystal in moving into her new place, along with referring her to the YOTO Mini-Mall for furniture and the Assistance League for a "Starting Over Supplies" kit to establish her new home.

Meredith Moore

Program Director



★ NEW YOTO COLLABORATION: ★ COACHING FOR YOTO STUDENTS

Touch Point Connection, in collaboration with YOTO, will launch a coaching program in August 2008 at Amphitheater High School. YOTO students at Amphi will be eligible for coaching.

Touch Point Connection in a new, one-of-a-kind Tucson-based nonprofit organization that provides volunteer coaches to teens who may be at-risk of dropping out of high school. Touch Point Connection’s founders and staff are professionally trained and certified coaches. They train and support community volunteers who serve as the teen coaches. High school students meet with their personal coach for 45 minutes each week, at school, during the school day during weeks when school is in session. School counselors make the student/volunteer matches. Each volunteer is matched with one teen and makes a one-year commitment.

If you would like to become a volunteer coach or provide financial support for this important program, please visit www.TouchPointConnection.org. Volunteer coach training dates: August 29 and September 16.

The Coaching Relationship

Within a trusting relationship, the Touch Point Coach serves as a sounding board, someone to talk to in confidence. A coach is someone who listens, is honest in his or her feedback, while not judging. A coach is someone who supports the teen’s agenda, rather than imposing their own. Additionally, the coach is a just-in-time teacher—someone who provides new or different insights to allow the teen to see a situation differently or to see additional choices. A coach supports the teen to practice and learn new habits, skills and competencies. Further, a coach is someone who helps the teen set and reach his or her goals.

“We believe that many dropouts are capable kids who simply stop coming to school when life becomes overwhelming and school no longer makes sense,” says Joan Martin, co-founder of Touch Point Connection. “It seems that many teens, even teens from some middle class families, are teetering on the edge and simply need more support than they have.”

Ms. Martin says the following statements are typical of those she hears from struggling teens:

- My dad lost his job and we’re going to lose our house.
- I got a D in math, why even try?
- I may be pregnant!
- School has nothing to do with what I want to do.

The Tucson program is based on a successful two-year pilot that Ms. Martin led in Seattle. That pilot matched 40 community volunteers with 40 teens enrolled in high school. The results were significant and included:

- Improved attendance
- More classes passed
- Decreased number of behavior referrals

Following is an example based upon an exchange between a student and her coach in the Seattle project: The petite 15-year-old sat calmly with her coach for their weekly meeting. Maria said she needed to find a job. It sounded simple enough to her coach until the young woman revealed pressures from home to drop out of school to pursue full-time employment. Maria told her coach that she lives with her aunt and uncle, who lost his job again – three jobs lost in six months. Now, her uncle decided it was time for the 15-year-old to become a family breadwinner.

Over the next several weeks, Maria and her coach talked about the teen’s long and short-term goals. They also talked about options and choices. She decided what she wanted to do and even practiced the conversation she wished to have with her aunt and uncle. Maria did get a job; however, she did not drop out of school. Instead, she found a weekend job, one that did not jeopardize her studies. Three months later, and successfully managing school and part-time work, Maria’s high school recognized her as “Student of the Week.”

THE DROPOUT EPIDEMIC

On average, 30% of any U.S. freshman class will not graduate from high school. In some minority populations, 42% - 47% drop out of high school. A recent report found that in a number of our largest cities, a full 65% - 75% do not graduate from high school.

Some are calling the U.S. dropout problem our “silent epidemic.” Colin Powell recently labeled this crisis a “national catastrophe.” The financial and community safety implications are serious. Research reveals that:

- each dropout costs the nation approximately \$260,000 over their lifetime;
- people who lack a high school diploma will be far more likely to spend their lives periodically unemployed, on government assistance, or cycling in and out of the prison system; and,
- 75% of state prison inmates and 59% of federal inmates are high school dropouts.



★ STUDENT NEWS



★ YOTO students **Melissa McCrary** (l), '08 Amphi High School, and **Amy Templin** (r), '08 City High School, were invited by Mayor Robert Walkup (center) to lead the Pledge of Allegiance at a recent City of Tucson meeting televised on Access Tucson.

★ Susan Curtis, YOTO Liaison at Catalina High School, called to let us know that **Okongo Majok** was accepted into the University of Arizona College of Medicine Med-Start Summer Program. The program provides a head start and college credit for high school juniors interested in health careers. Congratulations, Okongo!

★ **Shelby Graham**, '08 Sunnyside High School, has been selected to attend STEP (Student Expedition Program) this summer. The six-week program is held in the Alaskan wilderness and promotes leadership, teamwork, self-sufficiency, and self-esteem. Way to go, Shelby!



STUDENT NEEDS ALERT!

Students continue to visit the Mini-Mall during the summer for their basic needs.

We would appreciate donations of the following essentials:

- Sunscreen
- Laundry detergent (regular size)
- Dish soap
- Bottled water
- Ramen noodles
- Cereal
- Flip flops (new)
- Diapers (sizes 4, 5, 6)





★ YOUTH ON THEIR OWN CONTRIBUTORS

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 United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona
 United Way Valley of the Sun

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July 1, 2007 – December 31, 2007

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 Jeanne Deloria
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July 1, 2007 – December 31, 2007

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John Samuelson



YOTO WELCOMES...



DEANA SMITH YOTO Board of Directors

Deana Smith joined the Board of Directors in February 2008. A self-starter and proven leader, she brings a unique set of skills and life experiences to complement those of her colleagues. Deana graduated from the University of Arizona with two degrees: a Bachelor of Business and Public Administration in 1992 and a Bachelor of Science Nursing, R.N. in 1998.

While attaining her degree in nursing, she also directed her talents to the position of vice-president of Direct Machine, Inc. in Tucson. Her responsibilities included all accounting aspects of the business, the strengthening of customer and vendor relationships, and the creation of marketing materials. Deana made a major career move into healthcare as a Nurse Intern at Columbia Northwest Hospital of Tucson in 1997; in 1998 she took a position as a cardiovascular critical care registered nurse at Tucson Heart Hospital, where she is still currently employed.

Deana has been involved with Youth On Their Own since she was a student in the program during high school. She relates to a diverse range of people and has a first-hand understanding of the challenges faced by homeless and unaccompanied students. As a mother of two children and wife, she enjoys her family. Deana's interests in her "spare time" range from hiking and skiing to aviation and traveling.



HEIDI MACDONALD YOTO Administrative Coordinator

Heidi MacDonald assumed the full-time position of YOTO's Administrative Coordinator in early March 2008. She is the friendly, helpful voice on the phone along with expertly juggling numerous other responsibilities, including: directing incoming calls; assisting students and donors who visit the office; providing referral services; reviewing student enrollment applications to make certain they are complete; recording student Mini-Mall visits; as well as a plethora of tasks required for daily agency operations. Reflecting upon her work, Heidi stated:

"I have a passion for customer service and love working with people. I feel a great affinity for the students I meet through Youth On Their Own. I admire them for their courage and determination to accomplish their educational goals. It's an honor for me to help them on their journey toward graduation. My goal in working for Youth On Their Own is a simple one—to treat our students with respect and compassion—something they tell me they don't find that often."

"I'm so grateful to all our donors and am excited to see what they've brought for the students because I know how happy the students will be with their contributions. I love being part of the circle of giving and receiving—there is so much abundance here."

Originally from Oregon, Heidi relocated to Tucson in 1996 after living 16 years in Houston, Texas where she received her Bachelor of Arts in Fine Arts at the University of Houston. Extremely creative, Heidi is writing a memoir about the year she spent working on offshore drilling rigs in the Gulf of Mexico. She also enjoys decorating "art cars" and her current "Rose Car" generates smiles as she drives it around town.



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Heidi MacDonald, Administrative Coordinator



YOTO VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Front Desk Receptionist

Do you have a friendly, outgoing nature? Are you comfortable multi-tasking and working in a team environment with a diverse clientele? This highly visible position entails meeting and greeting YOTO student clients and supporters, answering general questions and phone calls, and directing calls to the appropriate staff member. Tasks include clerical duties and assisting staff with special projects as needed. There are several receptionist openings available throughout the week and hours are flexible.

Trucks and Muscles

Volunteers needed on an “on call” basis! Youth On Their Own receives calls occasionally regarding the contribution of household goods, such as small couches, student desks, and mattresses and box springs, which are perfect for student use but the donor is unable to deliver items to the YOTO office. This is the ideal opportunity if you are unable to volunteer on a weekly, regular basis but want to help, you possess a vehicle that can accommodate large items and are willing to pick-up items and deliver them to YOTO.

Please contact Maria Castro, YOTO Operations Manager,
at 293.1136 x 203 or mcastro@yoto.org.

Editor’s Corner

YOTO publishes a Fall, Winter, Spring, and Summer newsletter. Please feel free to call or email with your comments, suggestions, or change in contact information.

Gina Babunovic

Communications & Development Director

520.293.1136 x 208

gbabunovic@yoto.org

Thank you!