

Stories of *hope*

Maribel had a happy, stable childhood in a loving, single-parent household. Then tragedy struck: her 18-year-old brother died in a car accident.

She was still grieving the loss of her role model when tragedy hit again: her mother was diagnosed with terminal liver cancer.

At 16, the teenager became her mother's primary caretaker — feeding her, bathing her, assisting the hospice workers — all while still going to high school. Maribel often stayed up until the early morning hours trying to finish her homework.

After several months, her mother passed away. Maribel was completely on her own.

She tried to keep up with school and struggled to scrape together enough money to make the monthly mortgage payments on the house her mother left behind. Thanks to the YOTO stipend she earned through her stellar grades and

attendance, Maribel was able to worry less about finances and focus more on her studies. She also graduated from YOTO's Resale Home Store internship program, which gave her critical work experience and job skills.

Although she had to work extra hard to make up all of her missed credits, Maribel persevered and graduated from Tucson High Magnet School in 2016. She will attend the University of Arizona in the spring of 2017 to pursue a career working with children who have experienced drug abuse trauma.

Maribel says, ***"I am deeply grateful to all of YOTO's supporters. Your generosity truly did help me graduate from high school and better prepare me for life. Please know that your investment was not put to waste!"***



Maribel

Tucson High Magnet School,
Class of 2016

Read about the
Home Store on page 9

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Douglas Plecity, Program Data Technician
Daphne Soules, Program Assistant
Jacklyn Vaughan-Chaldy, College & Career Development Coordinator
Daniela Zasa, Senior Program Coordinator

1,588
homeless
students served

214
high school
graduates



YOTO Mission

Youth On Their Own supports the high school graduation and continued success of homeless youth by providing financial assistance, basic human needs, and guidance.

Connect with Us!



1660 N. Alvernon Way, Tucson, AZ 85712
(520) 293-1136 | YOTO.org



New CEO Welcome



Nicola

Chief Executive Officer

Want to receive future copies of the Youth On Their Own materials in a digital format? Email Kristyn Conner at kconner@yoto.org with your complete name and email address.

If you prefer not to receive future publications or have received duplicate copies of this publication, please let us know by contacting Kristyn Conner.

Dear friends,

I am both humbled and honored to introduce myself as the new CEO of Youth On Their Own. My passion for our community's underserved young people is what has brought me to YOTO and its wonderful mission. I bring a decades-long commitment to this community, and I believe in the power that education has to transform lives.

Within these pages you will see the successes that you helped create, and catch a glimpse into the struggles homeless teens face every day. They don't have anyone who makes sure they've eaten that day, finished their homework or made it home at night. Most of them are in survival mode, figuring out where they will sleep that night, trying to avoid repeating the mistakes of their parents. All they need are some resources and the knowledge that they aren't alone. **I encourage you to keep believing in them;** it gives them hope that someone cares about them and their future, someone they may not even know. Thank you for being that person.

One of the highlights you'll read about is the Resale Home Store, which opened in October 2015. Since then, it has become a success, breaking-even financially in less than eight months and launching twenty young people into the world with workplace skills. Two of our alumni recently returned to work as assistant store managers after graduating from high school and continuing their education at local post-secondary institutions. They are steps closer to becoming fully self-sufficient. All they needed was a little help from you and YOTO.

I look forward to the opportunity to meet you. Please stop in to say hello and take a tour of the Student Success Center or the Resale Home Store. Together, we have the potential to give hope, change lives, and build a stronger community.

Warm regards and appreciation,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Nicola".

Nicola Hartmann
Chief Executive Officer



YOTO Group

New!



**“YOTO Group...
a place to learn
how to become
an adult.”**



During the 2015-2016 school year, Youth On Their Own piloted a life skills workshop series, “YOTO Group.” Workshops typically were held during school hours, for 1 hour each month, with food and prizes, guest speakers, curriculum, and YOTO updates.

The majority of YOTO students do not have a consistent and caring adult in their life... that person who helps you navigate the adult world of job applications, making good decisions, and so much more. At YOTO, we step in to provide that guidance. We’ve realized that the students we serve needed to learn more about navigating systems — such as the Department of Child Safety (DCS) and the Department of Economic Security (DES) — applying for college, maintaining healthy relationships, steps to getting and keeping a job... all skills required to be a successful and self-sufficient adult.

The advantages to holding YOTO Group at schools were significant: we were able to eliminate any student transportation barriers, create a small and understanding community of YOTO students for peer support, tailor workshops to students’ specific needs, provide opportunities for communication between students and Program Coordinators, and get to know our youth in a relaxed and supportive environment.

“
The main goal of YOTO Group was to create a safe place where youth can interact with each other and feel like they are a part of a loving and supportive YOTO family.
”

-Daniela Zasa,
Sr. Program Coordinator

Last year, YOTO group reached over 60 youth in 3 schools – Tucson High School, Cholla High School and STAR Academic. At the end of the year, students said they looked forward to seeing other students and learning new skills each month. For 2016-2017, the goal is to serve at least 12 schools in Pima County, with the potential of reaching more than 300 youth.

Stories of *Success*

Ben was 15 years old when his alcoholic father, sick of parenting, kicked him out of the house.

The teenager spent the next two years on the streets or friends' couches before realizing that if he wanted to make something of his life, he had to finish high school. Ben discovered the YOTO program through a local behavioral health clinic. He re-enrolled in high school as a sophomore and got back on track to graduate.

The determined teen relies on YOTO services, taking advantage of the Mini-Mall for food, hygiene items, and other supplies that he couldn't afford. He was also chosen to be part of the inaugural class of YOTO's grant-funded Jobs for Arizona's Graduates – or JAG – Program. It's designed to help young adults overcome challenges, graduate, and successfully transition into further work and education.

Ben so impressed his peers that they elected him president of the JAG Career Association for 2016-2017. After he graduates from Southern Arizona Community Academy, Ben plans to get a job and enroll in classes at Pima Community College where he'll study

anthropology and linguistics and minor in religion. His ultimate goal in life: to be financially secure.

***“To all of the donors who make the YOTO program possible, know that your assistance today is creating a better future for youth tomorrow. YOTO has given me the resources to function and start down my path to a successful career.*”**

To the other youth who may also be experiencing homelessness, know that reaching out for help is not something you should be ashamed of because looking back, you'll realize that it was this type of help that got you to where you are today.”



Ben

2016-17 High School Senior
Southern Arizona Community Academy

Impact Report

4,973

hours donated
by volunteers



**We love our
volunteers!**

52%

AGES 11-17

48%

AGES 18-21

Race / Ethnicity:

46%	Hispanic
18%	White
14%	American Indian
10%	African/African American
9%	Multiracial/Other
3%	Asian or Pacific Islander

66%

of YOTO's support comes
from individuals like you

27%

from Corporate and
Foundation grants and gifts

47%

MALES

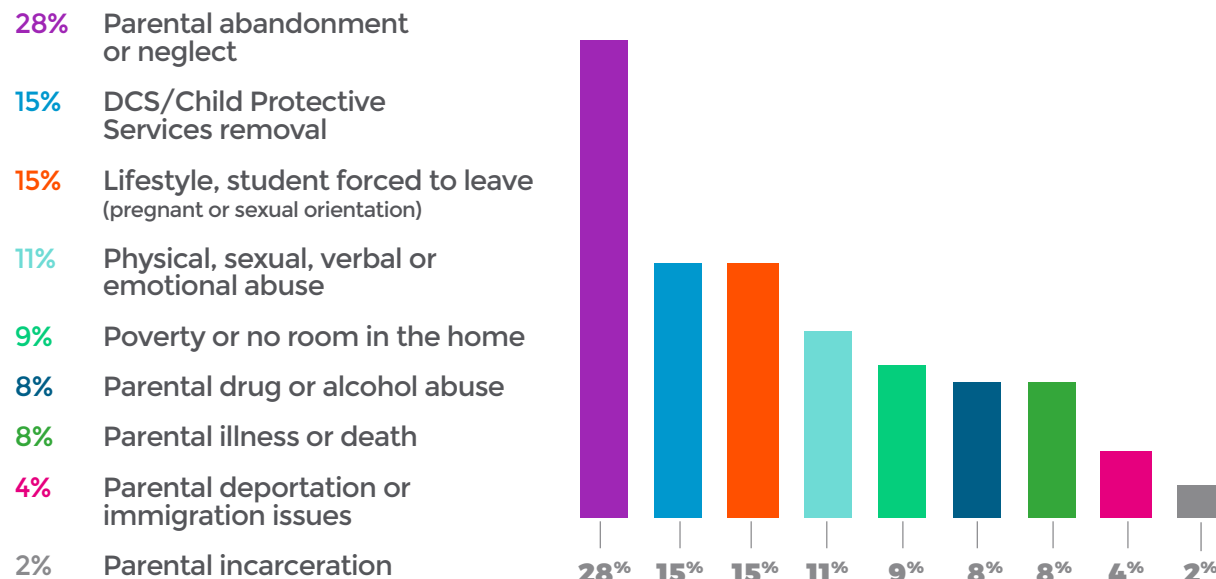
53%

FEMALES

Where are students living?

37%	relative
26%	friend
12%	group home
7%	couch hopping
7%	foster care
10%	alone/other
1%	shelter

Primary Reasons leading to homelessness



“Double your impact... double your gift.”

Your NEW OR INCREASED Gift to YOTO will be matched to \$100,000.

For every dollar you give to YOTO, the Connie Hillman Family Foundation will give YOTO fifty cents! Funds raised will be used to support the graduation of homeless youth AND prepare them for life after high school (further education, career, and more).

You helped...

669
monthly
bus passes
issued

270
students received emergency
financial assistance to help pay
rent, utility bills, school fees
or access medical services

9,400
student requests for basic
needs of food, clothing,
household items, hygiene and
school supplies to help pay
rent, utility bills, school fees
or access medical services

Your help with reaching this goal will impact the lives of many struggling homeless students throughout Pima County. To find out more, please contact Kristyn Conner, Director of Development, at (520) 545-0598.



Sources of Support

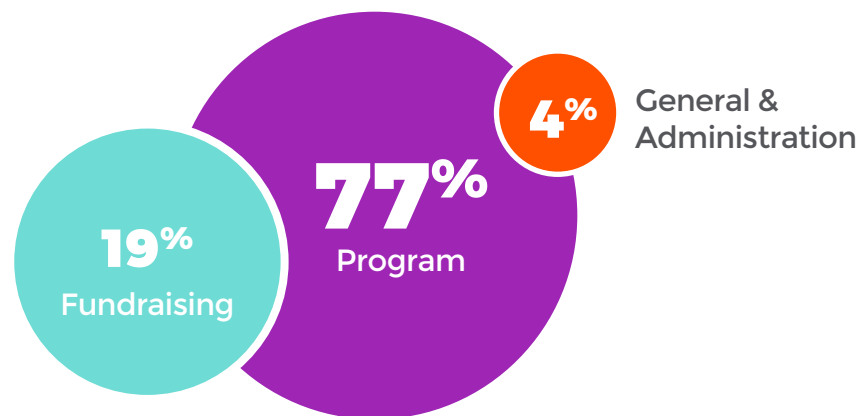
You are the reason that YOTO is able to assist students, who through no fault of their own, are homeless. Thank you.

Individuals, Corporations, Civic Groups & Churches	\$984,018
Grants and Foundation gifts	\$704,596
In kind Donations	\$288,226
Events hosted by YOTO	\$251,227
Events hosted by others to benefit YOTO students	\$192,279
Pima County & City of Tucson	\$182,000
Resale Home Store Sales	\$41,583
Interest/Dividends	\$10,395

Thank you for
supporting
Youth On
Their Own!



Where Your Dollars Go



Net assets beginning 7/1/2015:	\$1,619,404
Net assets ending 6/30/2016:	\$1,716,951



Note: Financial Report includes unaudited numbers. For a copy of the audited financials, please contact Kristyn Conner at kconner@yoto.org.



...it may well be the best \$20 you'll spend!

Maribel and Lexi, pictured, are among the nearly 6,000 homeless students in Pima County. During their senior year of high school, the two were selected to participate in the Youth on Their Own Resale Home Store's internship program, which blends academic work with practical, hands-on experience.



Anxiety has been the only constant in young Lexi's life.

In fact, she suffers from such acute social anxiety that when she started her YOTO store internship, she doubted she could even interact with customers. She ended up surprising herself.

"My anxiety wasn't affecting me as badly as I thought it would," she explained. "I wasn't just hiding out in the back of the store. And now I find that my confidence in my own ideas — and in myself — is increasing both at school and in my personal life."

Today, Lexi and fellow internship program alumna Maribel are part-time assistant managers at the Resale Home Store whenever they have a break from their full-time college studies.

The store's fan club extends beyond the students. Both customers and donors are impressed with the ingenuity of the idea as well as the quality and range of the merchandise. Donors Dick and Tommielee Keiler were so wowed by their first visit that they wanted to spread the word. The couple suggested a gift-card program.

According to the Keilers, "A gift card was a way to do triple duty: benefit the organization, please the gift card recipient, and get the word out about the store's existence."

So, a lamp can be more than a lamp — it may well be the best \$20 you'll spend all year long.

“

I just had such a bad start in life, but am having great success now... and YOTO was there for me the whole way.

”

-Lexi



**Every child
deserves a chance.**



Services Provided

What we – **that's you, our supporters,** and YOTO staff—provide to homeless youth:

- Basic human needs including food, toiletries, school supplies, and bus passes.
- Financial assistance to students with good school attendance and grades of As, Bs or Cs.
- Guidance, encouragement, college and career help, workforce readiness programs, and connections to other services in the community.
- Emergency financial assistance.



Regifting. Redefined.

Looking for that perfect gift for a friend or loved one? By giving them a gift card to the Resale Home Store, they can shop for themselves and support more homeless youth in need. 100% of proceeds support our core mission!

Call (520) 293-1136 ext. 118 to learn more.

Alumni *Success*

“ Looking back, I can genuinely say that I owe all of my success to YOTO and I cannot thank them enough. ”

In her own words...

“ Life wasn’t so great for me after my sophomore year in high school. My parents got involved with drugs, and I was left to fend for myself at the age of 16. Living in a toxic environment, I had to grow up quickly and figure things out on my own.

I had a friend who was in the YOTO program at the time, and she was the one who introduced me to Amphitheater High School’s School Liaison. Back then, I hated letting anyone know that I was in the YOTO program because of all of the questions I would get asked. I felt like my teachers treated me differently, and all I wanted was to be treated as a normal student. However, looking back on the past 10 years, I am so grateful for everything YOTO gave me and all of the wonderful people I met. I am still in contact with some of them and they still, to this day, give me guidance and advice. I consider them my family.

I graduated from the UofA with a Bachelors in Public Administration. In addition to that, I have 3 AA degrees, 2 certificates, and I am one-third through completion of a Master’s program at Western International University.

At 27 years-old I work full-time for the Pima County Sheriff’s Department as an intake support supervisor while going to school part-time. Looking back, I can genuinely say that I owe all of my success to YOTO and I cannot thank them enough. I could have become just another dropout statistic, but with the guidance I received, I turned all of my anger, hurt, and frustration into positive energy focused on one goal: graduating from high school. ”



Amanda

Amphitheater High School,
Class of 2007



1660 N. Alvernon Way
Tucson, AZ 85712

Youth On Their Own supports the high school graduation and continued success of homeless youth. To learn more, please visit YOTO.org or call (520) 293-1136.

Claim your Arizona State Tax Credit for helping homeless students graduate from high school!

Your gift to Youth On Their Own qualifies for a dollar-for-dollar credit to what you pay in Arizona state income tax. Couples who file jointly can claim a credit of up to \$800, individuals up to \$400.

Give Hope. Donate today!

Your donations to a qualifying charitable organization AND a public school can be claimed for an Arizona State tax credit in the same year. Please contact your financial advisor before making any tax-related decisions.

Thank you for caring!

TV

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“

*YOTO has been an amazing support group,
giving me a check for my good grades,
and just having someone to talk to,
especially after my mom passed away.*

”

-Gabriel

Youth On Their Own is a 501c3 nonprofit organization.

