

# Youth On Their Own

## Media Communications Policy

### 1. Purpose

To effectively manage communications through clearly defined channels in order to provide a consistent message, promote good public relations, mitigate crisis, and maintain a reputation of leadership and transparency on vital issues and breaking news.

### 2. Our Promise

In speaking with the media and public at any time, Youth On Their Own will provide factual information. We will serve as a reliable resource on youth homelessness, dropout prevention, and nonprofit best practice. Information shared will reinforce Youth On Their Own's role in the community as a trusted nonprofit leader.

### 3. Responsibilities

- The chief spokesperson for Youth On Their Own is the CEO.
- Back-up spokespeople are the Development Director and Board President.
- Only the chief spokesperson and back-up spokespeople, or their designees, are authorized to release information to the media and to the public.
- All other staff, board, and committee members should be professional and helpful to the media by connecting them with the spokespeople, but should neither speak to the media nor provide any information unless prior approval was given by the CEO.
- Youth On Their Own does not use its students for marketing, communications, or public relations purposes. Only youth who are 18 years and older and have provided Youth On Their Own with written consent to be used in media communications, are provided training, and have received authorization from the CEO may speak with the media.

### 4. Crisis Response

- All crises should be reported to a supervisor and the CEO.
- The CEO will report any crises to the Board President and, if instructed, to the Executive Committee and/or full board.
- There should be a designated crisis management lead person, directing and coordinating all aspects of the organization's response including managing the messages and the media. There should also be one designated spokesperson (likely the CEO) that speaks to the media to provide information about YOTO's response. In some cases, particularly in the event of a "small crisis" the two may be the same person. In others, the jobs may be divided to facilitate efficient handling the situation.
- All comments should be guided by professionalism and transparency, and serve to mitigate the crisis while reinforcing the leadership role of Youth On Their Own.
- "No comment" is not an acceptable response. If an answer is unknown or cannot be immediately answered, make note of the question, tell the inquirer you will get back with him/her, and do so. If the question cannot be answered due to a policy (such as sharing personnel information, etc.) let the inquirer know that.