



**YOUTH ON THEIR OWN™**

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*Database Specialist*

Kristin Ohman  
*Volunteer Manager*

Rachel Pollack  
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Marissa Washington  
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### Program Staff

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*Director of Programs*

Daniel Armenta  
*Special Projects Lead*

Kim Flores  
*Alumni Program Manager*

Matthew Schmidgall  
*Program Operations Manager*

Ashley Silvain  
*School Programs Manager*

Anthony Badalamenti  
*Program Operations Coordinator*

Jessica Cornidez  
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Diego Coronado  
*Lead Program Coordinator*

Kimberly Garcia Parada  
*Program Coordinator, Bilingual*

Justin Hopkins  
*Senior Program Coordinator*

Rachel Kahn  
*Senior Program Coordinator, Bilingual*

Adriana Mohammed  
*Senior Program Specialist,  
Data & Communications*

Brian Peel  
*Program Coordinator*

Tanya Perez  
*Program Specialist,  
Processing & Student Records*

Salathiel Ramos  
*Senior Program Coordinator, Bilingual*

Daphne Soules  
*Senior Program Specialist, Student Support*

Victoria Tullercash  
*Youth Engagement Coordinator*

## YOTO Data:

796  
homeless youth  
served

143  
high school  
graduates



## Our Mission

*To support the high school graduation  
and continued success of youth  
experiencing homelessness.*



**Elizabeth Slater**  
Chief Executive Officer

**Sean Denlinger**  
Board President

# A message from YOTO's CEO Elizabeth Slater and Board President Sean Denlinger

Dear YOTO Supporters,

We're so pleased to share our Annual Report for fiscal year 2020-21 - one of YOTO's most unexpected, most challenging, and most inspiring years yet!

The 2020-21 academic year will forever be remembered as "the year of COVID." Fortunately, Youth On Their Own proved adaptable and resilient in the face of the pandemic. We continued to offer virtual support for students, improved the technology of our online student portal, and introduced a tiered approach to services that enabled us to provide the right amount of resources for every young person in our program.

Sadly, school closures and virtual learning affected student enrollment across the board. But for youth experiencing homelessness, who don't have a consistent home from which to learn remotely, staying in school was an even bigger challenge. As obstacles to education became insurmountable, YOTO saw its enrollment numbers drop significantly.

We knew YOTO youth were out there! But we needed to be creative about where to find them. YOTO deepened its partnerships with school districts and other community-based organizations to ensure that YOTO youth had access to shelter, food, and other basic needs while they navigated their way back to the classroom.

Through initial school closures, followed by a return to some version of daily "normal," our program staff provided consistency and stability for YOTO youth who were managing more change than ever. We added services like mental health counseling to help our young people manage stress and anxiety. And now, we're happy to report that most of them are back in school. None of this would have been possible without your support.

Our community's response to COVID has been inspiring, and YOTO youth have benefitted greatly from your generosity. From record-breaking individual financial contributions and in-kind donations, to crisis response grantmaking, to the City of Tucson's *We Are One | Somos Uno Resiliency Fund* - our young people felt the support of their community in full force! We truly could not have survived this year without you.

We are most grateful to the YOTO Family that has supported us in unprecedented ways. Thank you!

**Elizabeth Slater, CEO**  
**Sean Denlinger, Board President**



# YOTO's 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response

## Supporting Youth in Crisis

### Financial Assistance

**\$1,136,113**  
**Direct Financial**  
**Assistance**

**\$153,037**  
**Emergency Bill**  
**Assistance**

COVID-19 affected YOTO youth in new and challenging ways. Many faced increased housing insecurity. YOTO addressed this need through our bill assistance program. This program allows students' essentials bills to be paid by YOTO directly to the vendor.

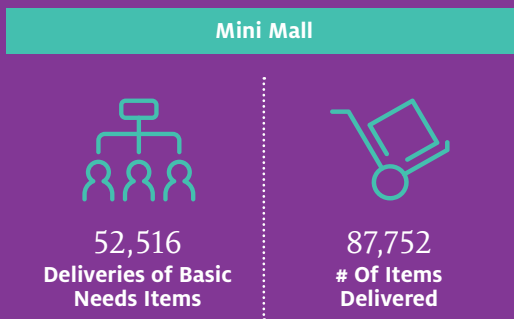
# Delivered Transactions	
Rent	107
Utilities	72
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>179</b>

*During the pandemic, I was so stressed about not being able to see anyone and had no motivation to continue. I want to share my thanks to YOTO because they didn't stop helping even though times were hard.*

(Gabriela, YOTO Alum and Ambassador)

### Basic Needs

Although our Mini Mall was closed to the public, YOTO continued to provide free basic needs items to students in a safe manner through the Mini Mall and the Student Portal.



*YOTO not only helped me by providing necessities, but also support so that I can live a comfortable and happy life.*

(Luna, 2021 Graduate)

### Guidance

Students needed a lot of extra one-on-one support this last year. Because schools no longer served as the meeting place for students, YOTO Program Coordinators made far more visits to individual homes, bringing supplies and delivering stipend checks.

YOTO also offers mental health services to alumni and students 18 and over to help them cope with the stresses of experiencing homelessness during a pandemic.



*YOTO has been a great support system for me. They are always so helpful when I'm in need of anything, even if it's just a conversation. If I ask for something, they're on it!*

(Chantel, 2021 Graduate)

## Youth On Their Own's Strategic Partnerships

COVID presented unprecedented challenges for organizations serving youth experiencing homelessness. Remote learning was unrealistic and sometimes impossible for these young people. Without school, they lost access to the resources provided by districts and nonprofit organizations, including YOTO. We took a bold approach to ensure that no young person would have to navigate the pandemic on their own. A structured partnership program and a commitment of \$155,000 in collaborative resources, YOTO worked with 14 local partners to serve over 3,500 youth - providing food and other basic needs, school supplies and technology, housing support, physical and mental healthcare, and school re-engagement programs.

*"Equity in philanthropy means putting down our institutional names and centering the needs of the community. We don't need to accept the norms of scarcity and battling for donors and funding. The most exciting thing about our partnership with YOTO is that it shows non-profits can share resources to achieve common goals. We are one team, working together to make Tucson better and more equitable for everyone."*

Kerri Lopez-Howell  
Sunnyside Foundation

*"In a year that started with so much uncertainty and so much increased need throughout our community, we are so grateful for our nonprofit partners like YOTO who joined us in thinking outside of the box to ensure that our students had the resources that they needed throughout the school year."*

Leah Noreng  
Amphi Foundation

*"Our strategic partnership with YOTO allowed us to increase the number of youth we can serve and helped us to collaborate with other agencies and schools to better serve homeless youth."*

Desiree Cook  
I Am You 360



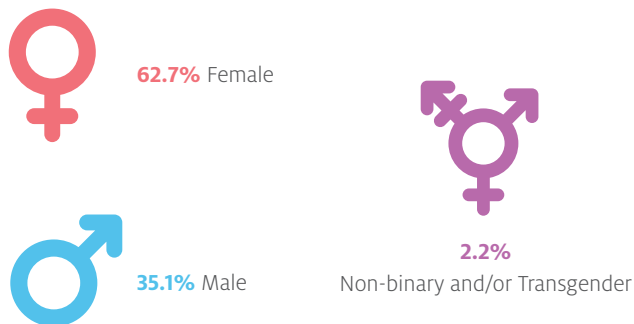
## YOTO Partners





# Who YOTO Served (2020-2021)

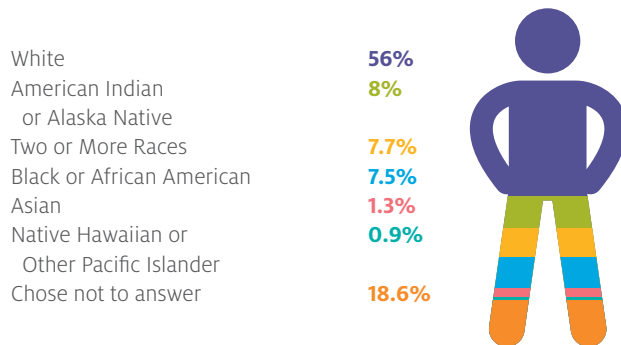
## Gender



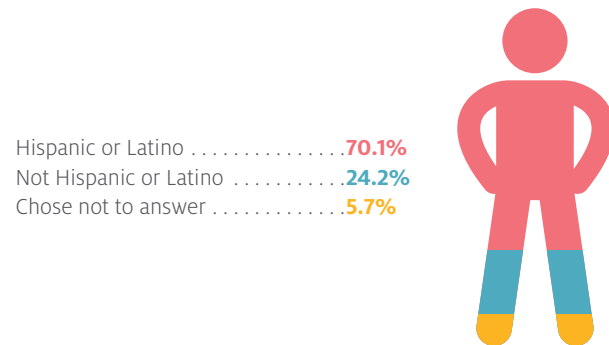
## Age



## Self-Reported Race



## Self-Reported Ethnicity





**137**

laptops provided



**\$1,136,113**

in direct financial assistance  
given to students



**\$153,037**

in emergency bill  
assistance



**255**

taxi rides  
provided



**71**

mattresses distributed

*When I was in high school, I didn't have much and I was alone and scared. Thanks to YOTO, I had access to free food, hygiene items, and school supplies. Without this program, I wouldn't have graduated or be where I am today. I am so excited to give back to this program for all that they did to help me.*

(Roberto, 2021 Graduate)



**8,999**

school supplies  
distributed



**48**

bikes provided



**40,719**

food items  
distributed



**21,509**

hygiene items  
distributed



**14**

vision referrals



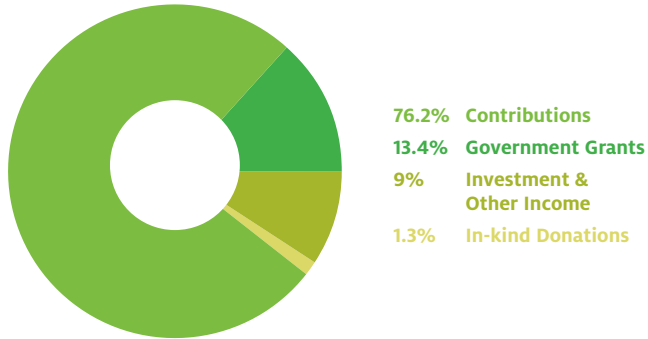
**YOTO's  
2020-2021  
Impact  
By The  
Numbers**



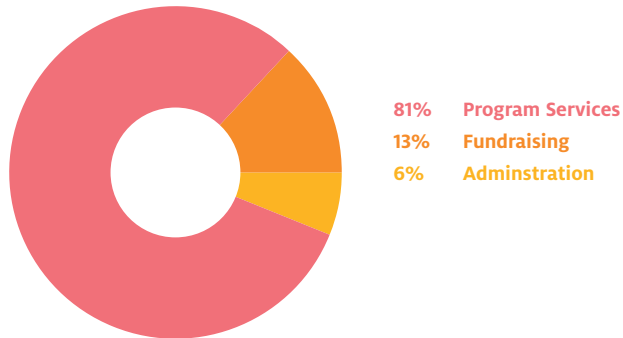
What  
Makes  
YOTO  
Work?

## YOTO Income

(From 2020-21 Audited Financial Statements)



## YOTO Expenses



<--- 16% Government --->

<----- 6% Business ----->



### City of Tucson

The Survivor's Grant program is part of the City of Tucson's We Are One | Somos Uno Resiliency Fund, the City's distribution mechanism for federal CARES Act funding.

With these one-time funds, YOTO provided hundreds of direct financial payments to YOTO students and alumni who are survivors of domestic violence and experienced financial hardships due to COVID-19. In November and December of 2020, YOTO distributed \$238,000 in direct cash assistance that students and alumni used for rent, to purchase food and clothing, and to pay utilities.

### NOVA Home Loans

Each year, NOVA Home Loans asks community members to nominate worthy nonprofits to receive a NOVA donation .

In 2019, Youth On Their Own was named "Favorite Charity" at the NOVA Home Loans Arizona Bowl and received \$25,000. The 2020 Arizona Bowl was canceled due to COVID-19, so NOVA Home Loans staff voted to award funds to charities using a different method than previous years. As part of NOVA's 2020 Giving Back campaign YOTO received \$69,000. Thank you, NOVA Home Loans!



<--- 16% Foundations --->

<--- 2% Institutions --->

<----- 60% Individuals ----->



## American Family Insurance Dreams Foundation

**For the fifth year in a row, the American Family Insurance Dreams Foundation provided generous grant funding to the YOTO Program!**

The Dreams Foundation understood that the impacts of COVID-19 required organizations to adapt and evolve to continue to serve their communities. During the pandemic, they pivoted their grant awards to provide flexible, unrestricted funding and eased reporting requirements. We appreciate the Dreams Foundation allowing YOTO to use the funds in a way that was most impactful for YOTO youth!

## 100+ Guys Who Give and 100+ Women Who Care

**Giving Circles are groups of community-minded individuals who pool their resources and make a substantial collective donation to a charity chosen by the group.**

Two local giving circles generously supported YOTO this year. Newly formed in 2020, *100+ Guys Who Give* selected YOTO as their first "Big Give" recipient and the local chapter of *100+ Women Who Care* active in Tucson since 2016, also voted to support YOTO as a group! Thank you to both giving circles for their support of YOTO!

## AZ Charitable Tax Credit Donor – Carolyn Leigh

**Carolyn Leigh has been supporting Youth On Their Own since the organization was working out of a trailer on the west side of town!**

Leigh has been supporting YOTO for years with her AZ Charitable Tax Credit. While she hasn't always had lots of resources, she likes that the credit allows her to use money she would have to pay in taxes anyway to support a local organization she cares so much about.

Over the years, Leigh has stayed up-to-date with YOTO through a friend who is a school liaison and even recommended YOTO as a resource to another friend who was supporting her grandson.

## Monthly Giving Club – Jay Peskoe

**Jay Peskoe connected with Youth On Their Own as a way to use his extra time in retirement.**

When his own children were young, Jay had been involved with their activities - serving as baseball coach and Cub Scout leader. He was interested in staying connected to Tucson youth, so when a friend recommended YOTO he was eager to learn more!

Jay quickly became a Monthly Giving Club donor when he joined the board seven years ago. He likes that he can see the results of his support immediately. As a member of the YOTO family, he feels proud to know we're doing something to help youth move forward to graduation while experiencing homelessness.

## IRA Donor – Jan & Jim Springer

**By donating the Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from their IRA accounts, Jim and Jan Springer have helped thousands of local youth.**

Jim and Jan's interest in helping homeless youth graduate goes back many years. Jan had a long career in education and said, *"I saw that when students had financial, emotional, and academic support, they were able to graduate and become contributing members of society."*



## How YOTO helps

### Introducing YOTO's New Student Portal

This year YOTO launched a new “YOTO Student Portal” – a tool that, while envisioned before COVID, has been absolutely critical to our ability to effectively help youth during this pandemic. The student portal allows students to sign up for YOTO services online, provides regular service updates to students, offers students 24-hour access to essential community resources, and provides a direct chat line through which they can get prompt answers to their questions. Some of the changes COVID has necessitated have actually been opportunities for YOTO to improve its program! For example, with the new student portal, we've been able to make our monthly stipend process paperless and allow students to order Mini Mall supplies like food and hygiene products online!

### Abbett Family Foundation



Ongoing development of the student portal is an integral part of YOTO's four-year strategic plan. In 2020 and 2021,

the Abbett Family Foundation provided \$268,500 in transformational financial support for the Student Portal. YOTO's CEO, Elizabeth Slater shared: *“The Abbett Family Foundation provides significant, meaningful financial support to carefully selected nonprofit partners where they can make a deep impact – and YOTO is honored to be a grantee! What makes this foundation so special is their willingness to fund infrastructure projects, knowing this work would be harder for us to fund through other channels. They believe in building our capacities and enabling us to take our impact to the next level.”*

YOTO's program focuses on **three components** to ensure homeless youth have the resources they need to stay in school and graduate:

- **Financial assistance** (up to \$160 per month) based on good attendance **and emergency bill assistance**
- Weekly access to **basic human needs** items, including food, toiletries, school supplies, and more
- **Guidance**, encouragement, college and career assistance, workforce readiness preparation, and connections to other services in the community

# For Our Students, And For You, Integrity Matters.

## 2021 Better Business Bureau Torch Award for Business Ethics



The BBB Torch Award is given to organizations that demonstrate ethical practices, promote a culture of ethics, are committed to the growth of all staff members, and engage and

improve the Southern Arizona community. In recognition of the nomination, YOTO CEO Elizabeth Slater stated *"Being an ethical organization means putting your values in action: living up to our ideals in all of our behavior, the way we treat each other, and the way we hold each other accountable. Youth On Their Own works hard to be an ethical organization in all ways. It is such an incredible honor to receive this recognition."*



The Charity Navigator four star rating recognizes organizations that have not only met traditional standards, but exceeded them.



The GuideStar Platinum Seal of Transparency

acknowledges organizations with the highest commitment to transparency.

## 2020 Bank of America Neighborhood Champions



YOTO was named the 2020 Bank of America Neighborhood Champion for Tucson! The award is given to nonprofits who are poised to take their work and their leadership to the next level. This award comes with a \$50,000 grant, as well as virtual leadership training by nonprofit

sector experts on topics ranging from human capital management and financial sustainability to storytelling.

*"As we consider many of the challenges that our community is facing – from the health crisis brought on by the coronavirus to the need for progress on racial equality and economic opportunity – the Neighborhood Champions program is a relevant and timely initiative to support the communities we serve,"* said Adriana Kong Romero, Tucson market president, Bank of America. *"Youth On Their Own has 34 years of demonstrated success in helping Southern Arizona's homeless and unaccompanied students stay in school and graduate, and this investment will help them make an even greater impact on the lives of homeless youth."*



*YOTO helped me realize that I wasn't alone and that other people can help me. They helped me get on my feet and opened up options I didn't have before.*

(Dianna, 2021 Graduate)



# YOTO's Volunteers Do It All!



2,568  
total volunteer hours  
donated



\$73,304  
saved with  
volunteer help

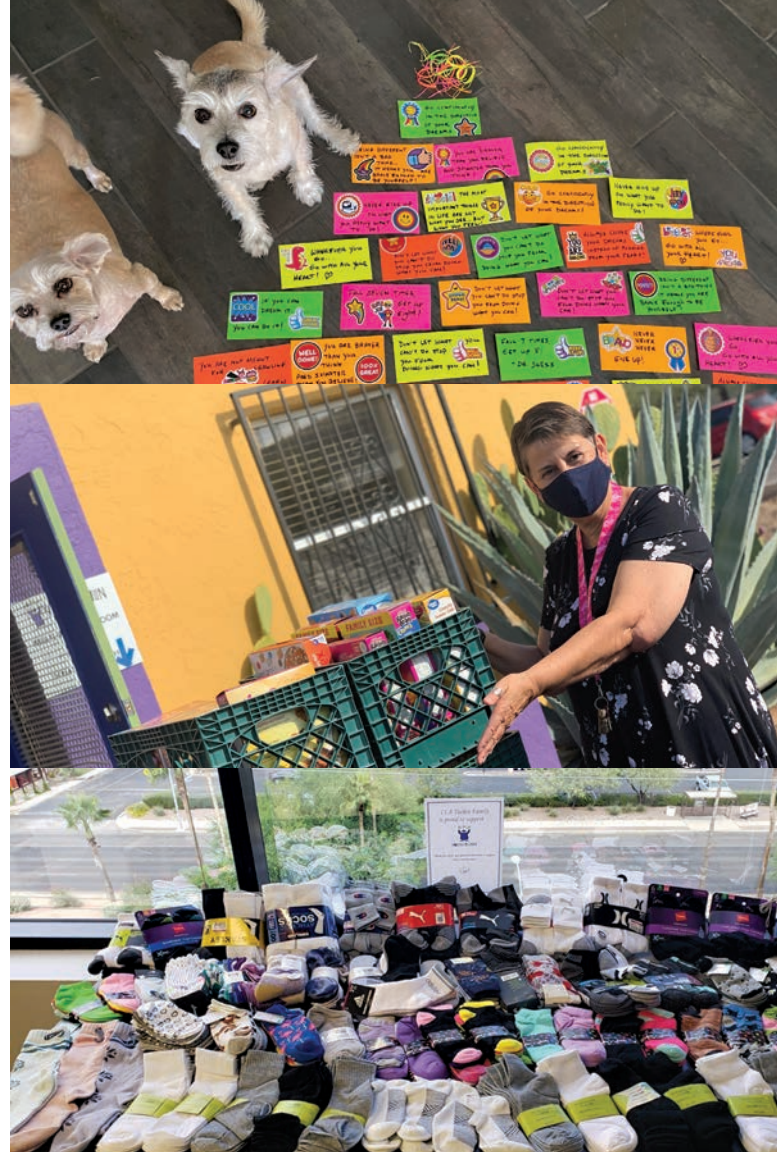
## A Special Thank You to Our Volunteers

With YOTO going fully remote, it was a tough year for YOTO volunteers and liaisons. Normally, we see volunteers every day at YOTO. They staff our reception area, stock the Mini Mall, pack food orders for students, and deliver supplies and stipend checks to schools. Liaisons at YOTO schools volunteer their time to help identify potential YOTO students and facilitate YOTO's program in their school. Yet, with schools closed and the entire YOTO staff working from home, most of our volunteer opportunities were unavailable this year.

Nonetheless, so many folks in our Tucson community showed up remotely to support the amazing young people we serve:

- We received hundreds of inspirational notes, motivating YOTO youth to persevere.
- Our community blew us away by holding food and hygiene drives that helped us restock our Mini Mall.
- The annual Socktober Challenge was a success, with businesses, clubs, places of worship and more working together to collect thousands of socks for our youth.

Truly, we're so grateful for the support of our incredible volunteers and look forward to welcoming them back to our office when it opens. Thank you, YOTO Volunteers!





## Carolyn

YOTO Alumnus & Ambassador

*“When COVID began, I was just getting ready to graduate high school. My plans were to move out and head on to the University of Arizona. The pandemic took everyone by surprise and it made me rethink my life. Adapting to going into quarantine, staying inside, not working, and not going to class in person was very odd. It was hard for those first couple months. Now, I am a sophomore in college and I moved out of my previous apartment with ex-roommates. There is still some financial instability here and there, but having support from YOTO has been very helpful. Being a part of YOTO is something I am very proud to say. I am very appreciative of the program as a whole. YOTO has helped me grow to be the young woman I am today and figure out my future career goals.”*

## Kris

2021 YOTO Graduate

*“I disliked remote learning greatly. There is nothing that compares to being able to sit in class and actually learn something. In my opinion, remote learning made school a thousand times harder. I had to deal with an enormous amount of stress as a result. The YOTO staff and my Program Coordinator, Brian, have helped to restore my faith in the future. I am very optimistic when I think of the future, I really do believe that I have a chance to make it! After becoming a YOTO participant, I started to grow the feeling of giving back. I need to help others the same way that I was helped. Thank you for everything you’ve done and everything you’ll continue to do [for youth experiencing homelessness]!”*



YOTO  
Student  
Stories



Because of  
supporters  
like you,  
YOTO...



*... got me out of very  
tough situations when  
I needed help and  
motivated me to continue  
on with my plans.*



*... is the thing  
I will miss most from  
high school. I will be  
forever thankful for  
this program!*



*... helped me become  
more confident in my  
own circumstances by  
providing me with the  
financial and social  
support to keep going.*



*... helped me stay  
focused, hard-working,  
and resilient when I  
felt like giving up.*



*... helped me find  
financial success  
so that I could find  
academic success on  
my own.*



*... gave me the chance  
to sometimes have  
fun and be a kid  
after I took care of  
my responsibilities.*

# Did You Know?

Your donation can support YOTO youth at no cost to you!

**Contributions of up to \$400 per individual (or \$800 for couples filing jointly) can be applied toward the AZ Charitable Tax Credit!**

Call us at 520.293.1136 or email [yotonews@yoto.org](mailto:yotonews@yoto.org) for more information about making your tax credit donation to YOTO!

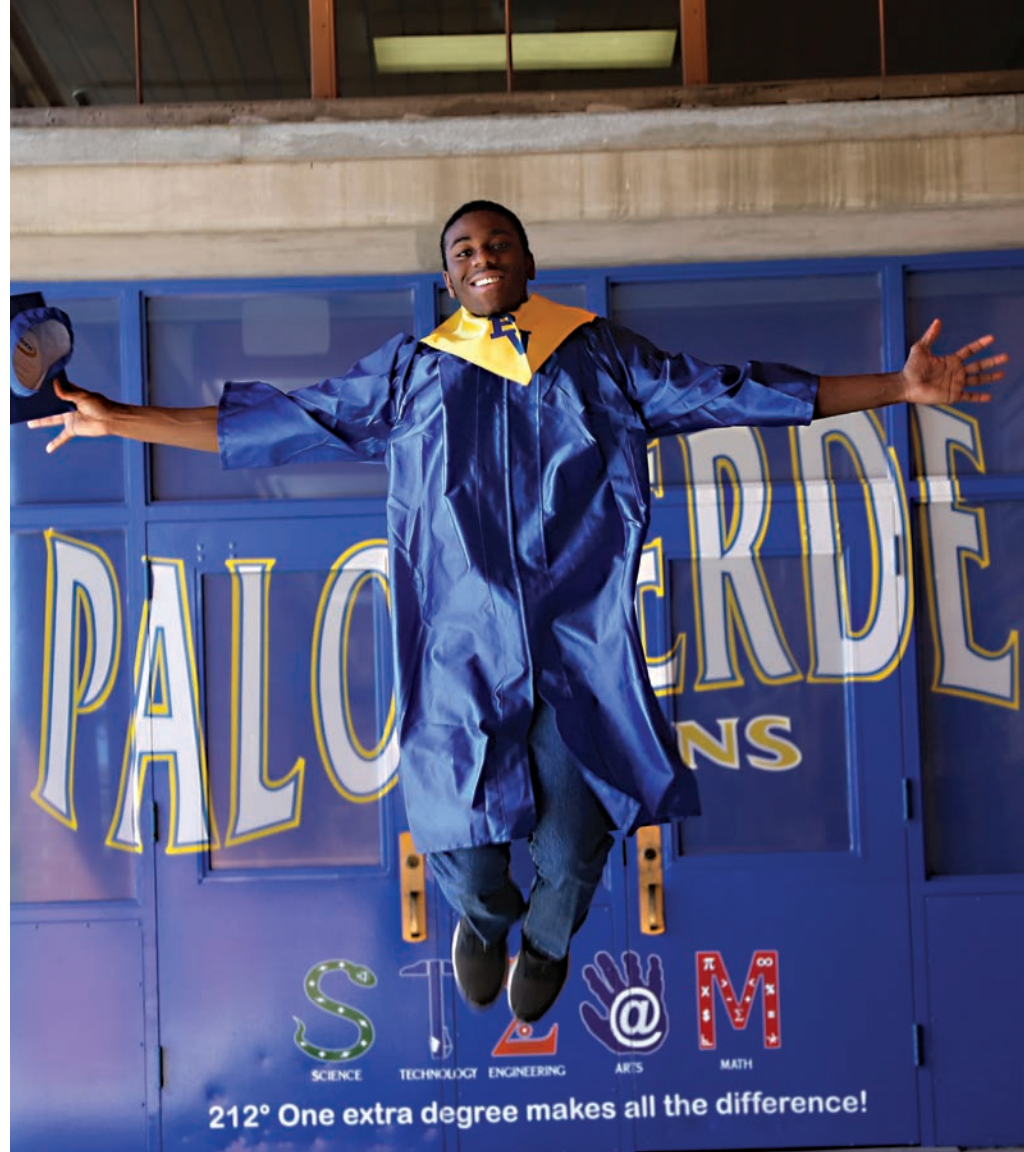
*Thank you for helping homeless youth succeed!*



YOTO's Federal Tax ID# 86-0644388  
YOTO's Qualifying Charitable Organization Code  
for the Arizona Charitable Tax Credit is 20365

*"I would have almost definitely dropped out of high school, but YOTO helped me work hard to graduate. I will always remember the love and support the YOTO Family gave me!"*

(Victor, 2021 Graduate)







*“Being in YOTO gave me the confidence and determination to want to continue to do better and excel, and along with that it helped me feel that there were no excuses to stop me because YOTO was always willing to help in any way possible. Whether it came to grades, food, hygiene, mental health, rental help, etc. YOTO was always there to help me feel assured throughout these four years and I am so grateful for that!”*

(Jasmine, 2021 Graduate)



Connect with us!



YOTO.org



1660 N Alvernon Way | Tucson, AZ | 85712  
520.293.1136 | YOTO.org

