



**DOUBLE** your impact with the YOTO Holiday Match!



Happy Holidays, YOTO Family!

My name is **Chuck Rudge**, and I'm a 2020 Youth On Their Own graduate. I'm currently part of YOTO's Ambassador Program, which means I get to communicate with folks like you who support YOTO and share how YOTO helped me. I'm so grateful for the resources and encouragement YOTO has provided me, so it's an honor to be able to write to you today!

People often ask me what things were like for me before I enrolled in Youth On Their Own. At the time, I was living with my older brother. It was hard being on my own, and honestly, I felt like I was going down the drain. I didn't have much hope, and I was angry and ashamed for being homeless. After I enrolled, though, the staff at YOTO reached out to me and made me feel less alone. For me, that was the biggest thing. The stipend, the food, the shampoo - all that is amazing - but **it was the hope my YOTO Family gave me that really made a difference!** For me, homelessness wasn't a choice. I didn't wake up one morning and decide, "I think I want to be homeless today." Being part of YOTO made me realize that, despite everything I've been through, I'm a still good person. **I know that I matter.**

For example, I remember when I got a holiday gift - a new blanket - from YOTO. Getting the blanket was a huge surprise for me. Growing up, I didn't really get any presents. When I received that blanket, though, I thought, "This is the coolest thing ever!" At the time, I was sleeping on the floor. For a really long time, I kept the blanket and slept with it. My heart felt at home knowing someone cared enough to get it for me. It made me realize that I was not less than others just because I was homeless, and that **a simple act of kindness can have a huge impact on a person's life.**

With your support, I made it through some very hard times and reached my goal of high school graduation. While I'm incredibly proud of my accomplishments, I know that there are many more students on their own who need the same resources and encouragement that I had. Every year, in fact, YOTO enrolls about **1,500 youth experiencing homelessness** in Pima County. That's so many youth!

**That's why today I'm asking you to continue to help and inspire these young people by supporting YOTO's Spread the Warmth Challenge!**

Also, you might remember that last year, two of our favorite YOTO Family Members - Larry “Buzz” Petersen and Robbie Willingham - offered to match gifts made toward the Spread the Warmth Challenge. This year, they’ve offered to do it again! That means that this holiday season, you can double the impact of your gift!

**If you make your gift towards the Spread the Warmth Challenge,  
Buzz & Robbie will match it dollar-for dollar up to \$50,000!**

It blows me away that there are folks out there as generous as Buzz and Robbie, and I hope our YOTO Family will rise to the challenge and take advantage of this awesome opportunity!

Another thing people often ask me is what I’ve been up to since graduating. I’m proud to say that I’ve got a great job and have started my own family! My girlfriend Audrey is my rock, my motivation, and biggest supporter... AND she just agreed to be my wife! We already have two wonderful children. I want to be the best dad I can and be there for them 100% of the time. I want my kids to never feel lonely and always know that they are loved. **My YOTO Family has not only inspired me to reach my goals, they have taught me that there are good people in the world.** There are not enough words of thanks to express my enormous gratitude for all that you’ve done!



This holiday season, I hope you’ll consider supporting YOTO’s Spread the Warmth Challenge. I can promise you that what you do changes lives! From the bottom of my heart, thank you for being part of my YOTO Family and helping young people like me defy the odds, reach for our dreams, and succeed!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chuck".

Chuck Rudge  
YOTO Ambassador

***PS: Don’t forget that if you pay Arizona state taxes, your donation of \$400 per person (\$800 per couple filing jointly) qualifies for the **Arizona Charitable Tax Credit!** If you have any questions, you can call us at (520) 545 0598 or visit YOTO’s website: [yoto.org](http://yoto.org).***