FALL 2026

YOTOSTAR NEWSLETTER

YOUTH ON THEIR OWN®

Supporting the high school graduation and continued success of youth experiencing homelessness



CEO UPDATE: Back to School, Back to Our Mission

Back to school is my favorite time of year. There is something incredibly energizing about seeing our returning YOTO youth and welcoming new students to our community. **Every young person we meet reminds me why this mission matters so deeply.**

It is an honor and a privilege to support youth experiencing homelessness as they pursue their education and build their futures. Providing school supplies, meeting students, and training our new YOTO Liaisons are some of the most meaningful parts of this season.



Elizabeth Slater, CEO
Youth On Their Own

These moments bring our mission to life and remind me why we are here.

And this is our mission in action...

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CEO UPDATE: Back to School, Back to Our Mission

I'm proud to announce that the **graduation rate for YOTO seniors was 91% in 2026!** That level of commitment and achievement is worth celebrating! None of this would be possible without you. Thank you to everyone who gives their time, resources, and heart to support YOTO students.

We recently welcomed two new members to our Board of Directors: one is a former YOTO youth, and the other is a middle school educator. Their perspectives are a powerful reminder of all the ways that volunteers contribute to our



organization. YOTO is heading into our busiest season of the year: a time when our youth need us most. **Your dedication to YOTO makes an incredible difference!**

With gratitude,

Elizabeth

Upcoming YOTO EVENTS

October 24
Rotary Club of Tucson Tucson Classics Car Show
Benefiting YOTO
The Gregory School

December 1-15
Light the World Giving Machines
Holiday Vending Machines Benefiting YOTO
La Encantada

December 3
Susan Grunebaum Pottery Fundraiser
Wilde Meyer Gallery

March 5, 2027
YOTO Spring Lunch
Tucson Convention Center

BACK TO SCHOOL CHALLENGE: Community in Action

This back-to-school season, our community came together to stock **YOTO's Mini Mall** with backpacks, school supplies, food, hygiene items, and other essentials. From individuals and businesses, to groups and longtime supporters, every

YOUTH IN THEIR OWN BACK TO SCHOOL challenge



financial gift and item donated helps YOTO youth start the school year prepared and confident! We're especially grateful to **Resurrection Lutheran Church** (left), who celebrated an incredible 25 years of hosting annual Back to School Donation Drives!

We are also honored to have the support of **KB Home** (right) and their trades partners for donating four carloads of items!

To everyone else who donated, gave financially, or rallied others to support—**thank you for showing YOTO youth that their community is behind them!**



GIVING WEEK: Top 40 Countdown

Double Your Impact!

Get ready to tune in!

YOTO Giving Week is back! This year, in celebration of our **40th anniversary**, we're counting down the Top 40 moments, memories, and milestones that have shaped YOTO over these past four decades. Hosted by local radio personality **Ken Carr**, our **Top 40 Countdown** will take us back to 1986 and revisit the stories behind YOTO's journey.

YOTO Giving Week is a week dedicated to sharing YOTO's impact and inviting our community to help shape what comes next. Each day, from **Monday October 12 to Friday October 16,** we'll share a new video highlighting the people, experiences, and achievements that have made YOTO what it is today—along with special matching gift opportunities!

Whether you've been part of the YOTO Family for decades or are just getting to know us, we hope you'll **tune in, follow along, and discover something new** about YOTO! And, if you're inspired to give, your generosity helps ensure that youth experiencing homelessness have access to financial assistance, basic needs, and the guidance to stay in school and build a brighter future!

Giving Week is October 12-16
Stay tuned at
yoto.org/givingweek



Giving Guidelines: IRA GIFTS

If you are 73 or older and must take a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from your IRA, consider making a **Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) to YOTO!**

A QCD is a direct transfer from your IRA to a qualified nonprofit that can count toward your annual RMD and may provide tax benefits. To count toward this year's RMD, your gift must be received by **December 31.**

Contact YOTO or your IRA administrator to learn more about making a QCD!

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: Carrie Inge



To learn more about volunteer opportunities at YOTO contact:
volunteercoordinator@yoto.org

How long have you volunteered with YOTO?
Nearly two years!

How do you help YOTO?
I volunteer in the Donation Center, accepting donations, and organizing, sorting, and bundling supplies that go to youth.

Favorite YOTO memory:
Receiving and distributing handmade quilt donations! They are works of art that the youth can treasure for years and years.

One thing you want people to know about YOTO:
I wish everyone in Tucson knew that the people and culture at YOTO are as special as its mission, and that the smallest acts to pay it forward can have the biggest impact. ***YOTO's the place to be!***

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MISSION MOMENT: Journey from YOTO Youth to Youth Action Board



Estevan knows firsthand what it means to be a YOTO youth. Today, he helps guide the organization that once helped guide him!

During his time as a YOTO youth, Estevan overcame challenges with the help of YOTO's resources, including the **Academic Stipend, the onsite Mini Mall, and staff guidance and support.**

Estevan described how earning the Academic Stipend provided both the push and relief he needed to keep moving forward. When witnessing friends struggle to afford basic needs, Estevan became a bridge to YOTO, encouraging his peers to visit the Mini Mall and connect with YOTO. With the guidance provided by YOTO staff, Estevan is now stepping toward a future he never imagined, recently completing his first college class at the University of Arizona's Eller College of Management!

Now, Estevan is one of the newest members of YOTO's **Youth Action Board (YAB)**. During his service he hopes to be an advocate and inspire other YOTO youth to embrace their experience and see them as a point of pride. When visiting the YOTO Youth Center, he says he is always smiling—and these days, he has a lot to smile about!

Estevan is becoming a role model for the next generation of YOTO youth!