

Together, we will support over 1,000 local young people next year.



Help Northwest Youth Services meet the needs of the youth we meet in 2019!
Donate online at: NWYS.org

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Meet Jessica.

Jessica found safety and stability after experiencing homelessness and trauma as a teen.

Winters were the hardest when I was homeless. When the snow melts all that water seeps into the tent. Blankets, clothes, everything is soaked. I think back to those times and all I wanted was a better life, I really needed it. Everyone deserves a second chance.

I grew up in Mount Vernon, bouncing back and forth between my mother and grandma at a very young age due to my mother's mental illnesses. At 17 I dropped out of school, couch surfed until I couldn't any longer, and became homeless.

I would go dumpster diving for food, sandwiches, anything. It is like living out of a backpack and out of a can. I was too focused on surviving to really think about getting a job. I made some bad choices, I had formed an addiction, and I didn't know where to start to make changes in my life or get help. During the two years that I was homeless, I ended up getting into an abusive relationship - there were brutal things that were going on.

Things got really bad one day and I ended up at a church. The pastor and his wife were the first people who helped me. They brought me into their office, gave me food, and gave me a number for the domestic violence shelter in Bellingham. At that shelter I withdrew from drugs. I ended up getting connected with Northwest Youth Services. I didn't think it would go anywhere, it surprised me when my life started getting in order.

My favorite thing about Northwest Youth Services was the support. I didn't feel like any one was judging me, on the outside or on the inside. We would talk about goals, setting goals of going to school and getting a job, and then worked through the steps to meeting those goals. We would practice interviewing. I got put on the wait-list for housing and I still remember the feeling of being really excited about my first place.

Today, I am working full time and am enrolled in Whatcom Community College, pursuing my Associate in Science and Zoology. A while back, I was approved for my dream apartment complex, I am still in the same unit near campus, working toward my goals.

*Jessica's story was shared at the 2018 Light Their Path Gala.
Thank you, Jessica, for sharing your story.*





On Thursday, September 6, Northwest Youth Services joined Birch Equipment at its first ever Birch Golf Classic – which raised funds for local youth and women experiencing homelessness.

The event was an incredible success – with a few hundred leaders from all walks of our PNW community coming together to play, sponsor and support the tournament and the 2018/2019 tournament recipients - Northwest Youth Services and Engedi Refuge.

We are very grateful to Sarah Rothenbuhler, owner and CEO of Birch Equipment, for inviting Northwest Youth Services to participate – as well as the Trailblazers, Teams and Sponsors who made the 2018 Birch Golf Classic a huge success.

We are looking forward to September 5, 2019 for the second annual Birch Golf Classic, and hope you can join us!

Learn more about the tournament and how to participate online at www.birchgolfclassic.com



We popped balloons (and champagne), heard from program staff and youth, and collectively helped to build a bright future for young people experiencing homelessness.

The *2018 Light Their Path Gala*, held on Friday, November 2, was our most successful event to date – and that is in no small part due to this community of supporters!

The room was full of generosity and a drive to make a difference for young people experiencing homelessness. It was an inspirational display of how our community stands up to support young people. Thank you to all those who attended, gave, volunteered and helped make the *2018 Light Their Path Gala* possible.

Congratulations to the 2018 Birch Classic Champions

First Place (Gross)
Haskell Corporation
Wes Herman, Trailblazer

First Place (Net)
Ram Construction
Chelsea Long, Trailblazer

Team Fundraising Champion
Hotel Bellwether

Key Sponsor
Dunkin & Bush, Inc.

Early last month, the board of directors of Northwest Youth Services announced that Riannon Bardsley, Executive Director for the last 9.5 years, will depart the organization this month.

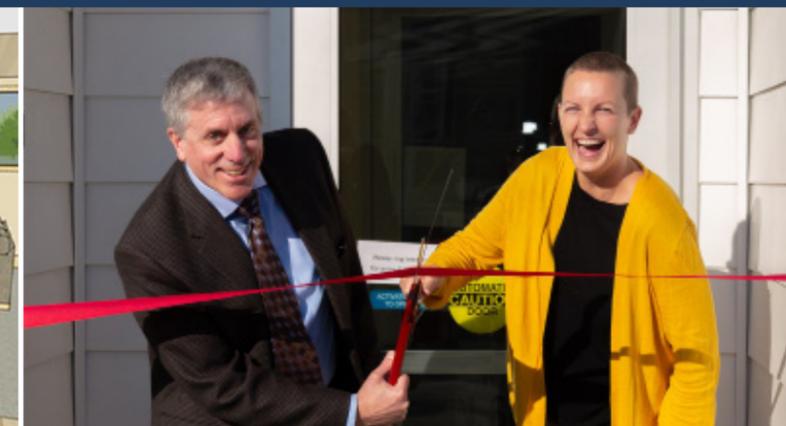
Riannon has been a powerful and effective leader of Northwest Youth Services, helping develop robust and impactful programs, leaders, staff, and community partnerships that, wisely, do not depend on one particular executive director to succeed. And now Riannon is ready to explore other professional opportunities. We are deeply grateful to Riannon for her commitment to young people in crisis, to the agency, and to our community and commend her for the stellar job she has done growing Northwest Youth Services.



With the help of an outside professional executive search consultant, the board will secure an experienced interim executive director to provide transitional leadership. In January 2019, a committee representing the board, staff, community stakeholders and youth will begin the search for the long-term executive director with the help of this same consultant.

As Northwest Youth Services moves into this next chapter with new leadership, we will continue our commitment to collaborate with young people and you, our amazing community partners, to realize the vision that all young people in our community have a place to belong: to be safe, heard, and valued.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to e-mail Hello@NWYS.org - we look forward to keeping you up-to-date as we move through this process together.



The Ground Floor - Opening Early 2019

It's cold outside and we are thrilled that this winter we will be welcoming youth into their new space - The Ground Floor at the First Congregational Church of Bellingham.

The Ground Floor will serve as a place for young people experiencing homelessness to eat, wash and rest, as well as connect with service providers (both from our team and community partners).

If you are interested in volunteering to support youth, please e-mail us at Hello@NWYS.org.

22 North Welcomes Residents Home

The ribbon has been cut, the doors are open and residents are moving in! On Thursday, November 8, we celebrated the opening of 22 North in partnership with the Opportunity Council.

22 North is supportive housing for youth, adults and veterans who have recently experienced homelessness. All of the residents will benefit from supportive services provided on-site by both organizations.

We're incredibly grateful for the donors and partners who made these homes possible.