

Teen Feed Times

Spring 2006

Teen Feed is located at a consortium of four neighborhood churches:

- Sunday– University Christian Church 4731 15th NE
- Monday– University Lutheran Church 1604 NE 50th
- Tuesday– University Temple Methodist Church 1415 NE 43rd
- Wednesday and Thursday– University Congregational United Church of Christ 4515 16th Ave NE

USM is:
 Megan Gibbard
Direct Service Supervisor & Outreach Case Manager
 Carrie Schriver
SLY Intern
 Eric Wirkman
Teen Feed Coordinator
 Mike Weybright
Chair, Board of Directors
 Jeff Albertson
Board of Directors
 Luciann McDonald
Board of Directors

Inside this issue:

Teen Feed: More Than Meals	2
Where Does the Money Go?	2
Youth Poetry	3
We Heart Our Food Teams	3
Remembering Sushi	5

What's New At USM?

It seems that there's always something new and exciting here at USM, and the past few months have been no different. Since the Fall/Winter issue of Teen Feed Times, some really great things have come to pass.

On December 14th, USM hosted the annual university district-wide holiday party, a chance for the larger community of youth & young adults, as well as service providers and volunteers to come together and celebrate. This year was a big success, with 120 youth attending, and approximately thirty staff and volunteer attendees as well. Food was provided by a joint effort of two food teams: the Mercer Island V.O.I.C.E. group, and the University Congregational team did an incredible job of coming together and making a great meal. Dessert was ice cream sundaes provided by the UW Alumni Association. Every young person got a gift provided by one of our amazing Secret Santas. Overall a great

event, that was truly rewarding for Megan and myself to have the opportunity to organize.

In mid January, Teen Feed had the good fortune to be able to relocate Wednesday and Thursday nights back into Ostrander hall at University Congregational Church, which is newly remodeled dining area and brand new kitchen. If you've spent much time in church kitchens, you might have a little inkling of how exciting it is for me to be getting to "play" in this amazing new facility: convection ovens, a new gas range, and my favorite: the "Red Goat" garbage disposal- that thing will eat just about anything! Big thanks to University Lutheran Church and University Christian Church for hosting us extra days each week for all those months while the remodel was in process.

In the past couple of months there have been some new additions to the office– Megan has



the help of Carrie Schriver an MSW student interning with SLY, as well the new executive director of the University District Service Provider Alliance (and former USM board member!) Laura Pritchard has moved in to one of the unused offices. This is a wonderful opportunity for Megan and myself, as Laura brings her nine years of frontline program experience in the U-District with her, and can serve as a valuable resource and support person for USM staff. In our other empty room, the wonderful people from Street Youth Legal Advocates of Washington (SYLAW) have set up a drop-in law clinic every Thursday after

Please see "What's New", pg.3

Just What is a Case Manager?

Friends and acquaintances often ask me, "What is a "Case Manager? .. I mean, what do you do?" Like Luciann's question about where the money goes, it is an important – and sometimes difficult – question to answer.

My short reply is this, "I do a lot of hanging out with and listening to street kids." This reply

gets to the heart of the work I do, hearing and listening. Seeing young people who are not otherwise seen.

[I hear my father talking to me now, saying, "Right Megan, but the city doesn't pay you to kick it with street kids .. What are the outcomes ...?]

And so my long reply to the

question "What is a Case Manager?" gets into the details, the specifics of what the youth I work with often need and ask for.

This article is about the outcomes. What are the day-to-day tasks? What am I doing, on any given day, if a USM

Please see "Case Manager", pg 4



More Than a Meal: Teen Feed and the Continuum of Care in the U-District

“Outreach programs within teen feed are a critical aspect of the work by U-District programs to provide homeless and at risk youth and young adults a continuum of care”

A lot of people I talk to about my job as Teen Feed coordinator imagine that I am running the stereotypical soup kitchen, with the difference being that instead of a line of older homeless people, there is a line of young adults and youth. While the main function of Teen Feed is to ensure that these young people receive a nutritious meal and have a safe place to chill out for an hour each night, it is much more. First are the connections that happen between youth and volunteers. Advocates, who commit to coming in once a week for a minimum of six months offer the youth an opportunity to interact with adults in a positive and appropriate way, something many have not had a chance to do before. Many times it is these volunteers that youth will come to with exciting news such as a new job opportunity, reconnecting with family, or having gotten accepted into school.

In addition to the Teen Feed volunteers, there are a number of other outreach workers present to help our young people to gain access to needed services

through Teen Feed. Most importantly among these is the presence of my coworker Megan Gibbard three nights a week working as an outreach case manager with SLY. She is there most Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings, and for a better picture of what she does please see her article elsewhere in this newsletter. Every Wednesday and Thursday, the outreach workers from Youthcare’s Orion Center downtown show up to talk with youth and provide a ride from Teen Feed to the 45th Street Clinic, where youth can get access to healthcare- from allopathic medicine, to HIV & AIDS counseling, to acupuncture and even dental work. On Wednesday nights we have a representative from Street Youth Legal Advocates of Washington (SYLAW) present to help answer youth’s legal questions, and to refer them to the law drop-in SYLAW runs every Thursday afternoon. Once a month we have someone who can help people sign up with the Washington Basic Food Program (food stamps). There is also a wealth of information on other programs and resources which I

keep out on the sign in table every night for youth to look at, and I always have socks, gloves and hats on hand, as well as other donated clothes.

These outreach programs within Teen Feed are a critical aspect of the work by U-District area programs to collaboratively provide homeless and at-risk youth and young adults a continuum of care from food and shelter to access to healthcare and educational opportunities, as well as chances for our young people to be just that- young people. Teen Feed is one of the programs in the University District with the lowest barriers to participation. Our age range is among the widest, and due to the nature of the program, there are just a lot less hoops for the young people to jump through in order to participate. That makes it vitally important to try to allow people access to as much help as possible from within Teen Feed, thereby preventing people from just “slipping through the cracks”.

-Eric Wirkman

Where Does The Money Go???

Who among us has not asked that question.

As I write checks every few weeks at the USM office I wonder if the wonderful people who send us money know where it goes. A brief overview follows: Things that directly benefit youth – bus tokens, sleeping bags, back packs and then there are usually four or five checks of \$15 or \$17 dollars every two weeks to various government agencies for ID for our youth who hope to land a job, get into school or find housing.

Teen Feed supplies -- napkins, gloves, plastic tumblers, food supplies to fill out a food team caught short.

Rent, phones, the copier,

office supplies – a note about that.....for years we were the grateful beneficiaries of University Congregational Church’s generous gift of office and utilities. However, several years ago we received a grant from the City of Seattle to offer case management to homeless youth in the U. Dist. Our staff doubled, and after a period of time with our programs housed at 2 churches, we began looking for office space that would put our staff under one roof and offer an area to meet with the young people we serve. We did find a place upstairs on the Ave. and it serves us well. But it is not free. Phones and internet connections cost money, as do the cell phones our staff carry.

Speaking of staff-- we pay them, though not as well as they deserve. Not as much as we wish we could, but we do pay them, as well as write those checks for medical and dental insurance and cover all the things that government requires.

We are enormously grateful to those who give to USM. Their generosity allows us to stay open, stay on reaching out to and walking with our youth as they make their various ways to adulthood.

—Luciann



Caption describing picture or graphic.

Food Teams Rock!

What would Teen Feed be without the food? There are some amazing individuals and groups who help out every month to keep Teen Feed open, and youths' stomachs full of great food. I wanted to recognize all of the regular food teams who volunteer their time and energy to plan a menu, get the necessary food, cook, serve and clean... To my food teams, you are all amazing, and my heartfelt thanks goes out to you all.

—Eric

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| 1st Sunday— St. Thomas More Youth Group | 3rd Tuesday— University Temple Methodist/ Wesley Club |
| 1st Monday— St. Stephen's Episcopal | 3rd Wednesday— St. Andrew's Episcopal |
| 1st Tuesday— UW School of Nursing and Friends | 3rd Thursday— Five Moms |
| 1st Wednesday— Wedgewood Presbyterian | 4th Sunday— St. Thomas More Parish |
| 1st Thursday— Temple Beth Am | 4th Monday— SAFECO |
| 2nd Sunday— University Unitarian | 4th Tuesday— Bishop Blanchet High School |
| 2nd Monday— Cedar Cross United Methodist | 4th Wednesday— Wallingford United Methodist |
| 2nd Tuesday— Jewish Coalition | 4th Thursday— Epiphany Episcopal |
| 2nd Wednesday— University Congregational | 5th Sunday— St. Thomas More |
| 2nd Thursday— Shoreline Covenant | 5th Monday— Congregation Beth Shalom |
| 3rd Sunday— Sammamish Presbyterian | 5th Tuesday— University Temple Methodist |
| 3rd Monday— Mercer Island V.O.I.C.E. | 5th Wednesday— University Congregational Men's Group |
| | 5th Thursday— SAFECO |

What's New (cont. fr. Pg. 1)

noon where youth can come and ask questions of students from the UW School of Law regarding any legal matters they may be dealing with. In addition to Laura and SYLAW, the office is now home to a great collection of fish, and our canine friend Sofie can frequently be found being absolutely adorable.

All of these changes are helping to keep USM at the forefront of direct services in the University District, and vital part of this community. As a part of the UDSP Alliance, we are working to ensure that homeless and at risk youth and young adults receive the services and care that they need to become successful and happy individuals.

—Eric

Youth Write!

Some of the most creative people I've ever met have been folks I've met through Teen Feed. I am hoping to begin to use the Teen Feed Times to allow their expressions to gain a wider audience. Look for poems, art, and other things from our youth in future issues. This poem was submitted by one of the young men who dines at Teed Feed...

I lead my family through the wilderness through the overgrown trees and brush, Something swishes by my ear, a near miss crouching I sniff the air, but I can't smell much. Having lost half my upper jaw in my quest to become alpha male, Now it is I who makes the law and banishment is our jail. A swish and a yelp behind me let me know that our assailant is still here, A snarl escapes my lips as I run forward to see what attacks my family, for there is nothing I fear. My brothers follow me to the fight and a man-beast appears from behind a tree, Snarling we circle him as he prepares to take flight another swish and another, my brothers fall before my eyes. More man-beasts are running to aid their brother

I stand my ground, growling, viciously clicking my fangs, Many more "swish" sticks slice through the air and down go my brothers mates and all our cubs. Howling in rage I jump for the throat of the nearest man-beast he falls to the ground, struggling to live but he fails, one after the other they fall to my jaws as I feast then suddenly I am running away from where my family fell. Trees are a blur as I run with no direction in mind with no family, I am now alone, lost, and confused I continue running, leaving my families death behind searching for life in the forest that feels abandoned. I am Wolf...and I am alone.

—Chief

Donate or volunteer with USM!

Please clip this form and send it in the enclosed envelope along with your donation.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Please send me more information on how I can help.

I would like my donation to be listed as anonymous.

(all donations over \$100 will be recognized in the Teen Feed Times)

A financial contribution sufficient to:

◇ Buy bus tokens for 20 youth (\$50)

◇ Buy a sleeping bag or backpack (\$30)

◇ Give toiletries to 20 youth (\$25)

◇ Pay for State ID for one youth (\$20)

◇ Teen Feed supplies for one month (\$200)

In Memory of Sushi



On Saturday, March 25th, one of our regular guests at Teen Feed, Justin "Sushi" Schwartz was tragically taken from us. Sushi was a fun and friendly young man with an easy smile and a bright optimistic personality, one not likely to be forgotten by anyone who knew him. His passing is a loss for all of us, but I for one am proud to have known him, however briefly.

—Eric

Case Management (cont. fr. Pg. 1)

supporter were to visit me in the U District?

Service Links for Youth (SLY) Case Management (that's me) is present at three nights of Teen Feed and Shelter each week. When in both of these programs, I am meeting youth, answering questions about resources, and checking in with the youth I know. Some nights I am arranging emergency shelter for youth when the ROOTS shelter is full, other evenings I am playing cards and talking. My work depends on the needs of the youth that day.

During those nights of talking and connecting with folks, several common questions and concerns come up. Most frequently, youth staying at shelter need help acquiring an ID so they can remain at shelter.

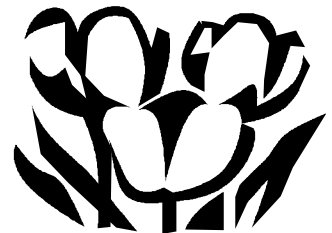
Working with street youth who may have never had an ID, or who are not in contact with any family members who have their important documents – this can be difficult! We struggle with the chicken and egg of needing an ID to get a birth certificate .. and needing a birth certificate to get an ID. I make a lot of phone calls, and I request a lot of documents.

After a youth on the SLY caseload acquires ID, we generally start in on other goals. Some youth need help filling out transitional housing applications, or applying to school. Young women want help finding a free pregnancy test. Youth ask for support in meeting court mandated drug treatment requirements or counseling. Some youth simply want to meet weekly for a listening ear and a reprise from the drama on the street. I am part counselor, part resource desk, and tiny part secretary.

The important things I achieve at work, the "outcomes," are helping youth meet their own goals. It may be a listening ear, it may be a PhD. So when I say "I do a lot of hanging out with and listening to street kids" – what I mean is that sometimes I am lucky enough to be present when a youth makes huge changes in their own life. I am lucky enough to see a youth impress themselves. All of it starts with the relationship.

And I do hope you can come visit me any given day in the U District. I'd love to show you around!

—Megan



UNIVERSITY STREET MINISTRY

4740 ~ B University Way NE
Seattle, WA 98105-4516

Phone: 206-522-4366
Fax: 206-522-3043
Email: teenfeed@yahoo.com

Visit us online at:
www.universitystreetministry.org

Since 1986.
Helping Our Youth To
Meet
Their Future Off The Street

NON PROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE PAID
SEATTLE, WA

PERMIT NO.
5718

