

# Teen Feed Times

Fall 2007

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## Secret Santa's Bring Hope and Joy to Homeless Youth

Recently, the U District lost one of our young people to the streets. Robbie "Rude Rob" Hamilton passed away on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. His death sharpens for us all the reason we walk with homeless young people as they live their lives – and especially the reason we do this work during the holiday season. We are not always present in the most difficult moment, a youth's passing – but we remember, we celebrate, and we create new memories.

It is fortunate for all of us that this holiday season offers many opportunities to give, to support homeless young people, and to remember the youth on the streets as we remember and give to our own families. In particular, I ask you to remember Robbie and the youth we have lost these past few years.

Each year, the U District providers team up to host The U District Homeless Youth Holiday Party. This December 12<sup>th</sup>, youth will come for a hearty dinner, incredible dessert, entertainment by a live jazz trio, connection with volunteers and staff, and a present for *every single young person* under the tree. Each year, the holidays become a time of new support and giving for these young people .. maybe for the first time ever.



*The 2006 Holiday Party*

**Supporters of USM and Teen Feed – you are the ones who make it all happen.**

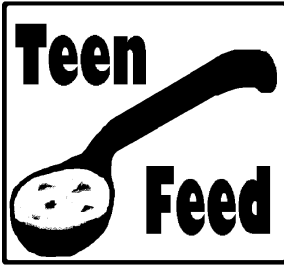
Please be a Teen Feed Secret Santa or donate holiday party general needs this year!

If you would like to sponsor a young person and provide the gift they ask for this December, email [secret-santa@teenfeed.org](mailto:secret-santa@teenfeed.org) for the list of youth. You can choose one or many young people, purchase their gift (an item/s around \$30) and drop the items off at the USM office. We ask that all gifts be dropped off by December 6<sup>th</sup>, unwrapped, to allow plenty of time for organizing and wrapping prior to the holiday party. If you would like to provide general need items – gifts for youth who do not have Secret Santas – please collect any of the following items: sleeping bags, gift cards, sweatshirts, bus tokens, hand warmers, back-

packs (*please check the complete list on page 3*). Please consider hosting a drive at your work, place of worship, school, family or community group. If you have a giving tree at your church or work – could it be dedicated to the youth we serve?

Thank you all for your involvement to make this very difficult time of year possible for our young people, and don't hesitate to contact us if you have additional questions. A final and big thank you to everyone who supported the youth last year by being a Secret Santa, donating general need items, time, or financial gifts. You are the foundation of the Holiday Party, and the foundation of support for these homeless young people.

*With hope and In Struggle,  
 Megan Gibbard  
 Direct Service Supervisor*



## Rude Rob

*"I wish I could share how bright [our young people] are, and how much they have to offer"*

Rude Rob Hamilton was a character. At once stubborn and considerate, he found his place on the Ave as the jester, the joker, the person who lightened gloomy moods and moments of gravity. Sometimes he took it too far, angering and annoying other clients, or managing to be asked to leave Teen Feed for the evening. Rude Rob could definitely live up to his chosen moniker. He was also full of life, and, more often than not, not particularly rude at all, at least not once he got to know you.

Rude Rob died on October 22<sup>nd</sup>, and a bright light within the lives of everyone he touched went out, and as I learned through the memorials held for him, he touched quite a few, not only in the U-District, but all across Seattle. Time and again in the week since we found out about Rob's passing, people have recounted to me how important he was to them.

Stories from not just other youth, but from family members and other service providers who had relationships with him have painted a more complete portrait of a young man who, while troubled, had so much to offer.

He also had a story not dissimilar to those of many people I work with: he had been through the foster care system, the criminal justice system, had chemical dependency issues, and was no stranger to the streets. But like all of the young people who Megan and I have the fortune to work with, he was more than those things. A loved son and brother, a true friend, with sharp wit, keen insights, and an uncompromising soul, who lived life his way, and made no apologies for it.

I wish I could tell you about clients like Rude Rob before they die, that I could give you more than the anonymized

snapshots that our confidentiality policies allow. I wish that I could share how bright they are, and how much they each have to offer. These young people aren't numbers, nor should they simply be composite sketches that we assemble to ask for more money. They deserve the dignity that their humanity demands and which is often the very first thing stripped of them, when they become homeless, when they enter foster care, when they are sent to county lock-up.

These young people, who live and die and hope and love and struggle on the streets are just that, young people. Robert A. Hamilton would never let anyone forget that about him. Don't ever forget that about any of them. Don't ever let me forget that.

--eric

## Volunteer Spotlight: Safeco Insurance Meal Team

Safeco Insurance hosts two regular Teen Feed Meal teams who volunteer to come in every fourth Monday and fifth Thursday. For the past five years, they've been bringing enthusiasm, fun, and any number of creative and delicious menus—from BBQ Chicken, to "breakfast for dinner." Safeco always makes a point of serving a meal they would serve to their own families at home. Safeco is one of the many meal teams who commit to helping keep young people fed and healthy throughout the year. Thanks Safeco!

—eric



Members of the Safeco Insurance Meal Team on a recent Monday night.

# Holiday Donation Needs...

Here's a partial list of items we need donated during the holidays (and year-round!). Please consider picking up a few of these items to help make our youths' winter a little easier.

- Gift cards for Food, Clothes or Music (\$30 maximum)
- Discmans
- AA batteries
- Large-sized hooded sweatshirts (pref. dark colors)
- Sleeping bags
- Backpacks
- Disposable hand warmers
- Travel-sized sewing kits
- Battery-operated travel alarm clocks
- Flashlights
- Bus tokens
- Pre-paid phone cards
- New socks, Gloves, Underwear & Cold weather clothing
- Dry dog food
- Travel-sized toiletries
- First aid supplies
- African American hair products
- Playing cards and Silly Putty
- Journals, Notebooks, or Art supplies

Please drop off donations by December 6th at our office: 4740-B, University Way NE.

Please call first to arrange a time.

We also need people to be Secret Santa's, and provide gifts for specific youth. If you'd like to be one of this year's Secret Santa's, please contact us as soon as possible by emailing:

[secretsanta@teenfeed.org](mailto:secretsanta@teenfeed.org). We ask that all gifts be dropped off by

December 6th, unwrapped, to allow plenty of time for organizing and wrapping prior to the holiday party. Specific Secret Santa drop-in hours are also:

Wednesday, December 5th from noon to 5pm

and

Thursday, December 6th from 4pm to 9pm

If you have any questions, or for a more complete list of donation needs, please contact:

Megan Gibbard, Direct Service Supervisor (206)356.9314

or [megan@teenfeed.org](mailto:megan@teenfeed.org).

## 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:

- \$500- Provide fees and application costs for Washington State ID for 5 youth
- \$250- Provide 20 youth with direct mentoring and support with SLY Case Management
- \$200- Buy Teen Feed kitchen supplies for one month
- \$100- Buy 2 backpacks & 2 sleeping bags
- \$50- Give toiletries to 25 youth
- \$20- Buy bus tokens for 10 youth
- \$\_\_\_\_ Other Donation

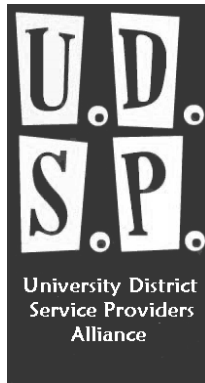
## Special Thanks to the Following Donors

Allen & Margaret Gibbard  
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 Barbara Peterson  
 Cedar Cross United Methodist Church  
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 Tom Choquette  
 University Congregational United Church of Christ  
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 Vincent & Carolyn Wirkman

## 20th Anniversary Drawing Results

In recognition of the University Street Ministry 20th Anniversary, we had a drawing for two Southwest Airline tickets. Our drawing winner is Meghan Goodman - Congratulations Meghan!



University Street Ministry is a Member Agency of the University District Service Providers Alliance.

The University District Service Providers Alliance (UDSPA) is a coalition of nonprofits working together to create a comprehensive continuum of services for homeless and street-involved youth and young adults. The UDSPA helps member agencies share resources and work together efficiently while pursuing our shared mission of offering a full spectrum of compassionate, quality care and support to Seattle's homeless and street-involved youth and young adults.

For more information, visit [www.udsp.org](http://www.udsp.org).

*Marking 20 years of  
 serving homeless  
 youth.*

**CHECK US OUT  
 ONLINE:  
[www.teenfeed.org](http://www.teenfeed.org)**

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 Fax: 206-522-3043

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**UNIVERSITY STREET MINISTRY**



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