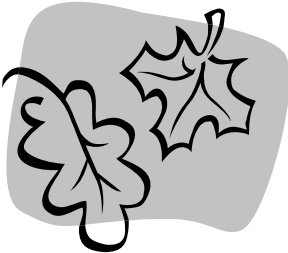


Teen Feed Times

Fall 2008



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The U-District Holiday Party: Brightening the Lives of Our Homeless Youth

When the days get shorter and Seattle begins to take on its famous wet and grey weather, we all tend to turn to things that comfort us. For me, it's reading a book under my comforter with a mug of tea. Fall comforts are warm stews, root vegetables, and the enjoyment I get out of giving hand-made gifts in December.

The winter season is a time when home and family takes on enhanced significance for all of us. **For the homeless youth on our cities' streets, not having a home becomes an even larger pain.**

Youth struggle to keep warm feet in the rain, where dry socks are only dry until they step outside. A young person will nurse a cup of coffee at a coffee shop for as long as possible. The bright lights and celebration of the holidays serves to remind youth what they wish they had: home, belonging, and family.

It is only once each year -- but homeless youth do belong, do have their chosen family around them, and do experience the feeling of home at the University District Holiday Party. Youth eat a great meal, listen to live music, spend time with adults and friends who care for them, and *every single youth who attends* receives a gift.

At the University District

Holiday Party, for at least one whole evening, homeless youth have the comforts of home at the holidays.

You can help youth experience home by being a Secret Santa or by making a donation!
Here's how:

-Be a Secret Santa— "adopt" a particular youth, and purchase the gift(s) they ask for this season. Beginning November 13th, a list of adoptable youth will be available for those who request it. Choose a youth from the list and purchase their gift, an item around \$30, before December 11th. Email secretsanta@teenfeed.org or call Ryan at (206) 356-9314 to become a Secret Santa!

-Host your own donation drive! We have a list of general needs items for youth. These items fill the "General Store" and provide gifts for the youth at the party who were not able to request a Secret Santa. General needs items are the perfect gifts to collect among your youth group, family, or work place. A partial list of general needs items is on page three – please email secretsanta@teenfeed.org for more information!

-Make a secure donation to University Street Ministry online at www.teenfeed.org. Type "Holiday Party" under "designation" when prompted and your gift will

be used to purchase presents for youth who need them.

There is a photo of a homeless young adult at the University District Holiday Party some years ago. The young man has now passed away, but we remember his brilliance, sharp wit, and gentleness. He is holding a gift and giving the thumbs up – a little self-aware, maybe – but smiling. A huge smile.

That evening, at least, he was home.

Help with the University District Holiday Party this year, and be a part of building this home.

In Hope,
 Megan



Looking Towards the Holidays, Celebrating our Connections

The sun is slowly fading, the air is cool and crisp, the leaves are changing...the holiday season is quickly approaching. The holidays can go a lot of different ways for the young people we serve. For some it's an exciting time because it's one of few opportunities to reconnect with family and friends. For others, it's a reminder of family experiences that didn't go so well, and still others feel lonely or frustrated because they don't have a family they can turn to. I don't want to sound too harsh or depressing, but this can be a very turbulent time of year for many folks.

No matter the experience that youth face, our main goal this time of year (as it is always) is to make sure they all know we are here to care for and support them. We are ready with resources in hand to support those who take steps away from the streets, we seek donations for supplies to

help sustain them through the challenges of winter, and we sit with open hearts and ears to hear their stories and to share in their sorrows or joys.

This is my first holiday season in the U-District, and I'm looking forward to spending most of it with the amazing people we serve. I'm especially excited for the U-District Holiday Party, where we get to celebrate this season with all the youth. For many, this will be the only celebration they will have this year, so we do whatever we can to make sure they feel special and loved when they attend. We'll have great food, live music, a photo booth and chances for everyone in attendance to get presents. From what I hear it's a pretty awesome party, and I'm having a hard time waiting for it to get here!

When I think about the holidays and the

varied experiences of the youth we work with, whether they are good or bad, I am filled with so much hope for their futures. These are amazing people that are accomplishing great things; people that have many great accomplishments in store! I trust and have hope in their successes, both now and in days and years to come. As the holidays near, I ask you to hope with me too, to hope in the youth and to keep your heart and mind filled with warmth and compassion for them.



With excitement,

-Ryan



USM Community Comes Together in Annual Celebration

-or- Eric Hearts All of You

On September 26th, USM hosted its second Annual Celebration. The Annual Celebration is a time for the community that makes USM go – the staff, Board of Directors, and all of the volunteers who keep us afloat to come together in one place and recognize the good work that we are doing year round. It is an opportunity to meet the other people who work tirelessly to make sure that USM provides safe, caring and consistent services to our young people.

This year's event featured the always great music of Far Corner, Seattle City Council Member Sally Clark, and a moving speech by our own Will Thompson about the impact that the volunteers and programs like Teen Feed made on his life. Oh yeah, and there was food. Lots of it...

Dinner was served at 7pm (seconds at 7:20!) and consisted of a choice between chicken, four cheese ravioli, or vegan Celebration Roast. Rolls, mixed-greens with toasted walnuts and goat cheese, and roasted green beans tossed with garlic and olive oil rounded out the meal. Drinks donated from Naked Juice and DRY Soda were also provided. Desserts were picked through a quiz on Homeless Youth Trivia.

This year also saw the initiation of a new tradition at the celebration: awards. There

are several components that go in to making Teen Feed happen: from advocates who come in to build relationships with our guests each week, to the food teams who come up with menus, acquire, prepare and serve dinner for sometimes as many as 60 young people, to the churches who donate their facilities to house Teen Feed. We wanted to recognize outstanding service in all these arenas, and lucky for me, there isn't a night of Teen Feed that doesn't have great volunteers.

This year, the Meal Team of the Year was Safeco Insurance. Safeco has delivered consistent high quality meals every 4th Monday and 5th Thursday for years now. The commitment of the Safeco volunteers has continued on through a move out of the U District to downtown Seattle, and more recently the acquisition of Safeco Insurance by Liberty Mutual.

Advocate of the Year was Erica "Dean" Dean. Dean has been incredible, working two nights a week this summer while we short staffed, sometimes serving as my only advocate on duty. She is positive, friendly, and helpful at Teen Feed, making connections with our young people, enforcing rules, and generally doing exactly what all my advocates do so well.

Lastly in the awards department, our first annual Carol Pease of the Year Award for

Maintaining Infrastructure & Superstructure went to... Carol Pease. Carol was the operations manager at University Lutheran for six years, working in that time to maintain an old building with its share of problems. Carol has recounted that her first day there were both a flood and a fire to deal with. This baptism in flames did not deter Carol, and she worked tirelessly to maintain a building which houses not just Teen Feed, but our partner agency Sanctuary Art Center as well as the Elizabeth Gregory Home Women's Drop In Center. Always advocating for Teen Feed, our young people, and social and environmental justice in general, Carol retired in June.

As the Teen Feed Coordinator, I am in program with most all of you, and have the opportunity in my normal work routine to get to know you all, but even with that unique (and wonderful) position, I am always in awe of what an incredible group of people I am privileged to work with in service to our young clients. To see you all in one room is, well, overwhelming.

My thanks to the Board of Directors and Megan for putting this event together, I had a blast, as I hope everyone else did. Until the next annual celebration, I'll see you all at Teen Feed!

In solidarity and affection,

--eric

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 & AAA 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 11th 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. 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 10th from noon to 5pm

and

Thursday, December 11th from 4pm to 9pm

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

Megan Gibbard,

or 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

Alisa & Michael Betz
 Allen & Margaret Gibbard
 Anonymous
 Bank of America Foundation
 Big Johns PFI
 Catholic Relief Services –
 Rice Bowl Missions
 Citlali Zaragoza
 Citra Frozen Yogurt
 Cupcake Royale
 David McKinlay Trust
 Donald Kane & David
 Robison
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 Dr. Richard & Betsy Kirby
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 Edgar & Elizabeth Bottler
 Flying Apron
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 Howard Aller
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 Jennifer Keys
 Jerry & Alyce Gatlin
 Kristina Morgan
 Lake Serene Safeway
 Le Painier
 Linda & the University Inn
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 Thoa Huynh
 Top Pot Doughnuts
 University Lutheran Church
 University Temple, United
 Methodist Church
 Venetia Runnion
 Vivace Coffee
 Wedgewood Presbyterian
 Church
 Wilkins Charitable Foundation

Street Outreach: Meeting Youth Where They're At

Greetings,

My name is Will Thompson, and I am the new Outreach Coordinator with University Street Ministry. We have recently started an exciting street outreach program three nights a week. This program allows us to go out and meet the youth on their terms, where they are most comfortable. We are able to provide them with immediate needs (clothing, snacks, hygiene supplies, etc.) while focusing on establishing strong and trusting relationships.

The hope is that we will be able to use the strength of these relationships to get folks into case management and eventually off of the streets. I am truly blessed being able to work with these folks in such an intimate way. With the coming holiday season, a lot of youth get depressed due to their lack of good relationships. This is one of the reasons I am so happy to be working with the people that I do at this time. Hopefully we can work towards positive change, using the change in weather, the holiday season, and our unique approach to work in tandem towards getting kids the motivation that they need to succeed. It is a pleasure to work at USM and with the people that I do. I look forward to updating you all in the future with tales of this new program's success.

Peace and Love,
 Will Thompson

Offer. Build. Ally.

Fall 2008

Marking 20 years of
 serving homeless
 youth.

CHECK US OUT
 ONLINE!
www.teenfeed.org

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