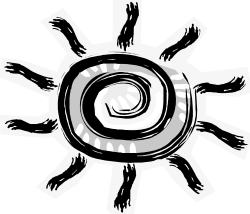




Teen Feed Times

Summer 2008



In this issue...

What's In A Name?	1
Welcome New Board Members	1
Building Community	2
SLY Snapshots	2
Special Thanks	3
Board Members Wanted	4
What To Give Right Now	4

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- Mike Weybright
- Citlali Zaragoza

University Street Ministry: What's In A Name?

The word "ministry" in the name of our organization is a puzzle for some. Why is it there? What does it imply? Are we a "pray to stay" organization?

While there are fine organizations that include a prayer service or bible study as part of their program, University Street Ministry is not one of them.

To minister is to care for or to serve. Years ago when the UW nurses indicated that malnutrition in the youth living the on street in the U District was seriously impacting their health, church members felt that they had to do something about the situation. Churches offered their kitchens and halls, and groups formed teams to prepare and serve meals. Other teams from the Jewish community

businesses, schools, groups of friends, and the developed and committed to the cause. After a few years we took on a fifth night, began offering clothing and toiletries, arranged for a van to take the youth to medical care, and began offering case management and access to legal advice.

Everything we do can be described as caring for and serving the youth who come to our door. To feed the hungry is a privilege that those of us on food teams are grateful for. To provide needed services to these young people, to make a difference in many small ways that in the end makes a big difference in their lives, is how we minister, how we serve.

--Luciann

USM Welcomes Three New Board Members!

USM is happy to welcome three new members to the Board of Directors, making it the strongest and most diverse that it's been in years.

Arezou Arefi-Afshar was a Teen Feed Advocate from 2006 through May of 2008. She is a manager at the Animal Hospital of Newport Hills, and has done volunteer work both locally and Internationally (Including El Porvenir in Nicaragua and Irans' Children). Arezou is currently attending Seattle University School of Law, where she plans to focus on International Public Interest.

Elliott Barrere is a long-time USM volunteer. He is currently Information

Technologies Lead at Synapse Product Development and a Systems Engineer at Cascade Logic where he does IT consulting. He holds a degree in Applied Computational Mathematical Sciences from the University of Washington.

Citlali Zaragoza has been a Teen Feed Advocate since September of 2007. She currently is an assistant Bank Manager with Bank of America, volunteers with March of Dimes and the Inglemoor High School's Spanish Department, and in the past has volunteered with El Centro De La Raza's Youth Mentoring Program.

Welcome Citlali, Elliott and Arezou!

—eric



Building Community Through Good and Bad Times

It was a rough spring for Teen Feed: Three behavior-based closures in three months, which, in the time that I've run Teen Feed is unprecedented, led me to wonder, "what is going on?" After our most recent closure, I brought this question to our guests in a number of ways: a group discussion before dinner, posters with our four (very basic) behavior guidelines and markers- allowing for reflection, as well as a new on-going feature of Teen Feed: a coffee can with paper and pens near it, inviting anonymous suggestions and comments about program.

Feedback to all this has been mixed. The overwhelming

response was that most people value Teen Feed and do not want to see it shut down based on the actions of a few individuals, but that they understand the need to have a response when these things happen. Some of the feedback expressed anger or disagreement with how the situation was handled, suggesting that we either should never close, or feeling that innocent individuals were being blamed for problems. I was happy to get all of it.

The real point is that there was feedback. It is critical to me that the people who come and dine have a voice in how the program runs, and that they feel their voices are genuinely heard. While it is sometimes a struggle for our young people to understand that hearing them doesn't always mean acting on their suggestions, over the past month I have had the opportunity to discuss the variables with many guests, and have come to better understand

and appreciate their perspective, and hopefully many of them have more understanding of what factors I have to consider around keeping Teen Feed safe and respectful. My hope is to help foster an environment in which we can level as many of the inequities and power dynamics as possible within Teen Feed, without denying their existence. While there is a power imbalance there – we control access to a very basic need – I hope that through a combination of steps to empower our young people and a truly intentional and deliberate caution around that power, we can all come to be program participants, whether guests, staff or volunteers.

I have a shirt from Real Change newspaper with the bold statement across the front: "Be Silent, Consume, Die." So often that is exactly the message that our young people (well, all of us,

really) hear: Don't speak your mind, it doesn't matter, just consume blindly til your time here is up. Teen Feed needs to be a place where our young people can be heard, whether it is around big things like program closures and policy changes that affect them, or just having the open ear of an advocate who talks with them through dinner. Many times we can't, and shouldn't, fix problems for our young people – in my experience they are some of the most resourceful and bright individuals I've ever met. We can however listen and validate their experiences, hopes and lives. Sometimes we can offer a different perspective, but always keeping in mind their autonomy and agency.

In Solidarity,
--eric



Service Links for Youth: Snapshots

Shot 1: Looking at my last update, I was reminded about Jack and the challenge it was from day one to build a constructive relationship with appropriate boundaries and to show him that I could be trusted. When I think of how our relationship has grown, I can't believe it's only been four months since I started working with him! We have recently been working on his next goal of getting DSHS benefits, all while continuing to learn from each other about life and our common and unique experiences.

SLY has been going really well, and I feel like I've been able to sink in and take ownership of my position. However, while settling in I sensed a problem...my title, Case Manager, didn't seem to sync with SLY's unique philosophy of serving youth and young adults with care and support. After a lot of reflection and conversations with Eric and Megan, I decided to change my title to Support Coordinator. I wanted to get away from Case Manager, because the youth and young adults I work with are not "cases" and it's not my business to manage them, and instead reflect

that my job is to help folks identify the goals and life changes they want to make happen and then support them and advocate for them in that process. This is the first of several changes to come that will help SLY continue to be a supportive, safe and constructive environment for those we are serving.

Shot 2: I'm continually humbled by the intelligence, strength, perseverance and success of the youth and young adults I get to meet. To highlight just a few of their accomplishments, since January twelve folks have completed the critical first step of obtaining ID, and twelve people found stable housing. The housing ranges from programs in the Seattle area to reconciliation and reunion with their family of origin. Beyond these incredible accomplishments, several other folks have made great strides on education, employment and other goals.

Shot 3: "Steve" and "Andrea" are working hard, and they have a lot on their plate. Andrea is several months pregnant with their second child; the first is in foster care. Their priorities right now are to get housing, complete the requirements to get their older

child back, and raise their family together. Andrea has to complete several tests and parenting classes, all while working part-time and taking classes at a local community college. Steve was just forced to quit his job because of a felony in his past, and as a man of color, he faces extra challenges as he struggles to support his family. It's a bit of an understatement to say they have a long road ahead of them, but in spite of all this, they have not given up. Every day they get up and continue to move toward their goal: attending classes and meetings, saving all the money they can, holding on to the love they have for each other and their children. Whenever I see them I sense this incredible resolve that lets me know they will be successful. I can't imagine how difficult their journey must be, but I look forward to the day when they look back and take pride at everything they accomplished for themselves.

—Ryan

Special Thanks to the following donors...

Eric & Denise Hinze
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 University Temple United Methodist Church

Also thanks to all who give through the Microsoft Matching Gifts Program, Safeco Insurance Corporate Matching and the Washington State Combined Fund Drive!

If your place of work offers corporate matching, please consider leveraging this benefit to support the homeless youth we care about. Contact Megan Gibbard for more information, 206.522.4366 ex. 4 or megan@teenfeed.org.

...We couldn't do it without you!

Thanks and congratulations to Carol Pease on her retirement June 30th 2008. Carol worked at University Lutheran as the Operations Manager for nearly seven years. In that time she has been a die-hard supporter of Teen Feed and our homeless young people.

Carol has also been active as a local organizer with Step It Up, a national Climate Change activism group.

Carol and her husband Bruce are planning on sailing around the world together. We wish them the best!

—USM Staff and Board



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.

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.

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

WANTED!

USM's talented and dynamic board is seeking one additional board member with nonprofit financial experience to serve as our Treasurer.

Do you have experience in nonprofit fiscal management? Do you know someone who does?

The USM board sets the long-term direction for the work we do with homeless youth, as well as ensures that month-to-month operations are financially and legally sound. Serving on the board means keeping the best interests of our youth paramount, and making sure that USM will care for those best interests.

If you can contribute one evening a month and have skills in accounting or finance, please call Megan at 206.522.4366x4 to find out if you might be the person we're looking for!

What to Give Right Now...

SUN SCREEN & ALOE VERA GEL

During the summer our clients spend most of their lives under the sun, which translates to lots of sunburns. Travel sized Sun screen can help prevent them from burning, and aloe vera to care for burns when it's too late.

HAND SANITIZER

Many times our young people don't have access to places to wash their hands. Travel-sized bottles of hand sanitizer are easy to carry in a pocket or backpack to help them keep clean while staying mobile.

BACKPACKS

What can be said about backpacks? They sometimes need to hold everything that our young people own. Sturdy day packs in dark colors are always in need.

AAA BATERIES

Batteries are a constant need for our clients. This year we've seen both an increase in the number of people needing AAA Batteries and a decrease in the number having been donated.

For more ideas or to arrange a time to drop off donations, please contact Megan Gibbard: megan@teenfeed.org or 206-522-4366 x4.

SUMMER 2008



*Marking 20 Years of
Serving Homeless
Youth.*

**CHECK US OUT
ONLINE!
www.teenfeed.org**

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