

HEARTS —WITH-A— MISSION

TOGETHER WITH YOU



Update from Hearts With A Mission



In Medford, our kids were granted access to the Kids Unlimited's playing field, which is just across the street from the shelter. After doing school work all day, they could be found playing a pickup game of volleyball or nine-square. It was such a blessing for them to be able to get out and run off some energy!



Congratulations to Daniel Delgado, Medford Shelter Life Coach, who received the award for Outstanding Junior in Criminology and Criminal Justice from Southern Oregon University!



Tony and the kids in Grants Pass, grab some drinks at Dutch Bros. before picking up the donated vehicle.

Letter from the Executive Director



Kevin Lamson
Executive Director

I would like to thank everyone in our community for all the prayers, love, and support you have provided Hearts With A Mission, not only through this pandemic but throughout the last 10-years serving youth together in our communities.

HWAM shelter programs have provided almost 1,200 youth 46,450 nights of shelter and nearly 116,000 meals. Hearts' goal is always for family reunification, but when kids are unable to return home or they turn 18 and no longer able to stay at one of the shelters, we have a host home model for kids to enter through the through our Safe Families for Children (SFFC) program. The SFFC framework supports the hosting of vulnerable children/youth. SFFC creates extended family-like support for families. in need through a community of devoted volunteers motivated by compassion to keep children safe and ultimately together with their families. Through HWAM's SFFC program we have been able to provide over 9,300 nights of shelter for 188 youth in Jackson, Josephine, and Lincoln Counties.

In March of 2020, HWAM opened a 12-bed Transitional Living Program for youth 18- 21. This program provides shelter for young adults up to 24 months. During their stay they receive life skill training and support while trying to navigate a transition to self-sufficiency. This is an essential resource for youth who are exiting Foster Care with nowhere to go. Studies show this extended support will change the trajectory of their lives as they enter into adulthood providing them critical tools they need to become successful as adults.

Your continued support has resulted in changed lives as families are restored, and kids are provided hope for a better future. Together we are making a difference in the lives of kids and their families. Families are reunified and the love of God is being shown to His people in the services we are so privileged to provide. Many of the kids you have supported with your generosity are now contributing members of our communities.



Together with you,

Kevin Lamson

Kevin Lamson, Executive Director
Hearts With A Mission

Dutch Bros donates SUV to Grants Pass Shelter

Transportation is essential to the shelter's operations. It means getting kids to school, doctor's appointments, sports, and visits with their families.

Dutch Bros surprised us by donating a 2015 Toyota Sequoia SUV. The kids thought they were going to Dutch Bros to get some drinks. They were stunned and in awe when they learned that this was now a vehicle they got to ride in.

This was such a blessing for us.



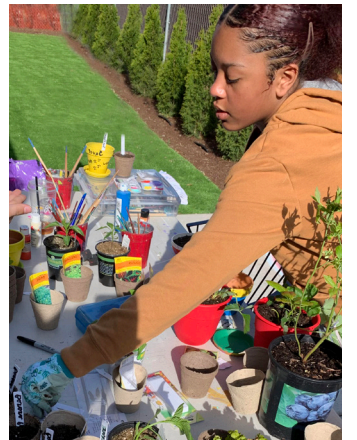
Rising to the Challenge(s)

Stephanie, at age 15, reached out to Hearts when her parents were going through a divorce. She had initially opted to live with her dad, but was having a hard time adjusting and ran away to be with her boyfriend. When that didn't work out, she went to live with her mom and new stepdad. This also proved to be challenging for Stephanie so she asked to stay at Hearts while her family situation stabilized.

At Hearts, it didn't take long for Stephanie to shine, even with the "COVID-19 shelter-in" as our new normal. Stephanie is very creative. This proved to be a much-needed trait keeping her engaged while living in a youth shelter during a very difficult time. She constantly looked for ways to have fun and exciting things to do (like creating a board game); she became an excellent chef, helping to make dinner and delicious salsa; and was very excited to help set up a new greenhouse donated by a generous contributor.

Stephanie is an excellent student and continued to place a high priority on her education.

She worked to repair her relationship with her biological dad. He truly loves Stephanie and was worried sick for his daughter. Stephanie decided to reach out to her dad by writing him a letter. Then one day there was a knock on the door of the shelter; there was Stephanie's dad! She instantly burst into tears. Stephanie soon realized how important her relationship with her dad was. During her stay at Hearts, our Life Coaches worked alongside Stephanie to teach communication and coping skills. This led to reconciliation and Stephanie moved back home to live with her father. Stephanie is a great kid and we are so happy for her.



Stephanie works on plantings for the new greenhouse.

Adjusting to a New Normal

Will Young,
Medford Shelter Manager

Q. How has it been in the shelter since COVID-19?

A. It has been an interesting and amazing experience. At first there was too much TV, so we had to adjust. Everyone worked together to be creative and pitch in where help was needed. The staff and kids bonded early. Being an emergency youth shelter, we are always going through a lot of changes, but for two months when everything locked down, things were stable. In a time

of uncertainty, some of these kids had a semblance of a routine, some for the first time. We had structure and a schedule. They were invited and encouraged to weigh in and many really stepped up and we got to see them shine.

Q. And after the first couple of months...?

A. Around Mother's Day we saw tensions building. Being away from their families was hard and they were getting stir crazy. As things were loosening up, we had a few rough weeks. It is hard when a child makes friends (even best friends) in the shelter and then one day those friends exit out of the shelter.

Q. What are some good memories from this time?

A. All the creativity being put forth by the staff and the youth. It was amazing. Our staff really stepped up and used their talents. We had people in our community donate food, supplies, art materials and a greenhouse! The kids learned how to cook and garden. They painted and created games to play.



Transitional Living Program

Questions and Answers with TLP Director, April Waggoner



Q. What are some of the challenges for the youth being in the program?

A. Many of our youth come from foster homes or shelters where there is a daily/weekly regimen. Usually, a parental figure assists in the regimen and the follow-through. At the TLP home, there is a structure requiring them to set their own schedule, and they are learning how to self-manage their lives. They are learning how to live with roommates, how to complete house-hold responsibilities, search for jobs, budget finances, and time management.

Q. How did you navigate the initial learning curve?

A. Every other week during skills training, we ask if there are issues in the house needing to be resolved. We do not want anyone bulldozed over by a more strong-willed person - so we've created a safe space for them to work out their grievances. Weekly meetings provide an opportunity for youth to learn about communication, confrontation, and conflict resolution. Staff provide continued support with the young adults while trying to understand their differences, strengths, values, and walk beside them with patience and grace.

Q. What has surprised you?

A. The lack of opportunity needed to learn life skills such as cooking, doing laundry, or knowing how to resolve conflict. Our TLP Case Manager assesses the lagging skills for each young adult. This helps us understand how we can better support each individual and teach the life skills they need to become independent.

Q. What has encouraged you?

A. Watching young adults grow in various areas, seeing them learn skills, and when you can tell they "got" the lesson. Several are motivated to gain employment and increase their education.

One young adult graduated high school; three started in a vocational-technical programs, and four gained employment since coming to Hearts TLP. Four young adults plan to further their education by either completing high school, continuing in college or registering for college. That encourages me!



April Waggoner,
Transitional Living
Program (TLP) Director

TLP: A Brand New Program Starts Growing Roots

Q. What is the Transitional Living Program (TLP)?

A. The Transitional Living Program is a supported independent residence for young adults ages 18-21.

Q. How has the Transitional Living Program been going?

A. So far, it is going great. We are learning along the way. As we encounter situations or obstacles, we regroup, adjust, and continue to move toward the goals for their future.

Q. What are some of the parameters of the program?

A. The program is about learning how to navigate successfully in the real world and the rights and responsibilities of being a young adult. We have structure and a handbook for the young adults to follow. Many rules are basic and common sense. There are no drugs or alcohol allowed in the home. Youth are required to have a minimum of 36 "productive hours" per week; this can be either working, attending school, or volunteerism.

Q. How has COVID-19 affected the program and the youth?

A. We have implemented OHA's recommended safety protocols. This resulted in young adults being unable to see their friends or family - which was hard for them. They are very focused on achieving their goals. When COVID-19 hit, it reduced their ability to move forward on some of these goals, which was devastating to them. Being isolated definitely allows for depression, and we did encounter situations where creative thinking was imperative to the health and well-being of the residents.

The First Couple of Months

The Transitional Living Program (ages 18 - 21) opened this past March

Finding Purpose, Finding Passion

Q. What is one of your goals for the youth in the Transitional Living Program?

A. To expand their vision of life by trying to find ways to spark their interest. We work on getting them to ask the question: "What's your purpose/passion?"

Helping them explore and get a grasp on what their strengths are and what they value. Do they want to work with people or work on projects?

Jobs are usually entry-level for them at this point, but even these jobs can be the right steps if they are leading them to their passions

We want to expand their views to include more options and exposure rather than the ones where they might be familiar with from their past.

"The mystery of human existence lies not in just staying alive, but in finding something to live for." – Fyodor Dostoevsky

Q. Is there a way our Hearts community can help?

A. Yes, with informational interviews, job shadowing, or temporary work where they could experience a particular field of interest.

Contact robb.e@heartswithamission.org, if you are interested in helping us out with vocational experiences.



A Young Woman Paving Her Own Way



Ayana has seen her fair share of challenges in her young life.

She is currently a resident of the Transitional Living Program.

Ayana's family has been struggling with homelessness for a long time. Her mom and young siblings are currently staying in a hotel with help from

the Maslow Project, while her older brother is sleeping in his vehicle.

At 18 years old, Ayana is trying to be the head of the household.

Ayana recently completed high school and is the first person in her family to graduate.

Her mother recently had surgery and is on dialysis, so Ayana has taken on the role of "nurse." She learned how to bandage her mother's wounds and accompanies her to dialysis.

Ayana's younger siblings are in the third and sixth grades. She has taken on the role of "teacher" supporting her younger siblings with their school work during the 'shelter-in' as mom isn't able to help.

Ayana recently got a job and is so excited! She is also registering for RCC. Her ultimate goal is to become an ultrasound technician, but she is also pursuing certification for welding which will allow her to make money quickly. Ayana is also a talented artist.

Ayana feels the weight of her mom's illness and a responsibility to her family. She is an amazing young woman who is working hard to overcome these challenges and reach her future goals!

We are so proud of you Ayana!



Safe Families for Children

Our Families are Getting Stronger Because of COVID-19



The current public health emergency has highlighted just how vulnerable some of our families are. A virus does not stop addiction issues, homelessness, or domestic violence.

Unfortunately, what we are currently seeing is the danger of these situations increase. In the upcoming months, we expect incoming calls for help to increase dramatically.

Our Safe Families volunteers are ready. The greatest blessings and where I have seen God within all of this; people are answering the call and stepping up quickly without hesitation. We are vetting volunteers and filling real needs for families in crisis.

Just recently, a single mom was fleeing from domestic violence with her 3-year-old son. She was trying to find a job during this global pandemic. She had several job interviews but had no one to watch

her son so she could attend her interviews. This single mother heard about Safe Families for Children and made the call to ask for support and help. We were immediately able to connect her with a Family Friend volunteer who watched her son at a local church and her residence while she went to her interviews. This mother was able to gain successful employment by having someone through Safe Families watch her son. Her son loves dinosaurs and spending time with his Family Friend. Whenever she came to watch him for the day, his face would light up. Safe Families for Children is supporting isolated parents with Family Friend volunteers to help build a healthy support system. Hence, parents have connections and support during their seasons of crisis, primarily through this pandemic. ~ Marisa Hayner, SFFC Coordinator, Lincoln County

SFFC Core Values

Radical Hospitality | Compassion fueled by Mercy | Disruptive Generosity

Loving Back

Marisa Hayner, Safe Family Coordinator in Lincoln County, recently had lunch and tea with Peggy and her 15-year old daughter, Violet.

Peggy is a unique personality with a “unicorn-sneezed-on-hippie vibe.”

Violet had been living with her dad, but when he could no longer take care of her, she moved back with her mom. Peggy, who has been homeless for six years, was still living in her van. Violet had not lived with her mom for five years, so it was no surprise; this presented several challenges.

At this point, Peggy and Violet reached out to Safe Families for Children. Violet was matched with a host family who provided respite on several occasions.

During the COVID shelter-in, Violet was not able to see her mom. Not being able to attend school was also an added struggle for Violet. She missed being able to get out and see her friends. Peggy was left feeling broken, isolated, and asking, “why should I do this?” Marisa and our SFFC volunteers were there to encourage and support.

Peggy soon found a job and was able to reunify with Violet. They recently invited Marisa over for lunch and tea.

Marisa was thrilled about this opportunity for connection. Even though Peggy and Violet had very different beliefs to Marisa’s, they valued the love shown to them and wanted to love back. “It was a perfect example of two completely different lifestyles working together.” That was very special.



We Were Made for Connections

Tony Mendenhall,
Grants Pass Shelter Manager

Q. How has it been in the shelter since COVID-19?

A. Surreal. Completely. Our primary objective is family reunification and reconciliation. It has been challenging when kids can’t be in contact face-to-face with their families. Our Life Coaches have become school teachers, and they have been spending a lot of time working with the kids. All the kids have completed their school year with passing grades. I’m not a fan of the Zoom meetings. The way we relate to each other is entirely different on a Zoom call than in person.

Q. What have you learned from this quarantine time?

A. How vital relationships are to us! We have missed our volunteers, mentors, and families. We missed seeing all our meal volunteers. We have missed that meaningful part of our routine.

Q. Have you made any changes to the shelter during this time?

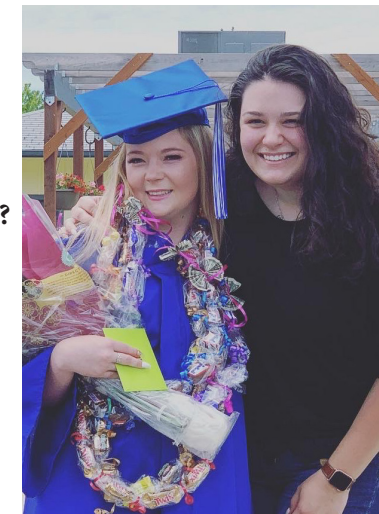
A. Yes! Thanks to a Community Development Block Grant from the City of Grants Pass, we were able to complete projects that desperately needed to get done. We installed new siding and had the home professionally painted. We installed a window film that will provide more privacy while cooling the shelter. We have an incredible volunteer, Karren Stripland, who is a master gardener. She has helped with our landscaping since our shelter opened. Some kids will go out and work with her, and she teaches those who are interested in gardening.

Q. What are some positive things to come out of this time?

A. We have had opportunities for art, music, and PE. You could see the kids developing skills and talents. Some of the kids have developed excellent basketball skills. I hate to say it, but I’ve started losing a few one-on-one battles. We had two juniors graduate high school! They just dug in and got after it. We are very proud of them. I’m also so proud of our Life Coaches, who took on so many additional roles like teaching and cooking.

Q. Has anything surprised you?

A. We have had some kids with behavioral problems. I was surprised to see how well they were doing on their school work and how hard they were trying. Other kids loved to learn and want to do school work. The staff scheduled the day and worked to tailor a plan to the individual kid.



Safe Families for Children An Alternative to Foster Care



In the U.S., an estimated
400,000 children
are in foster care.

- Kids placed in foster care are approximately:
- Twice as likely as other children to have a learning disability
- Seven times more likely to suffer from depression
- Six times more likely to have behavioral problems

(Center for Health Journalism)



Why Safe Families?

“It’s kind of hard being on your own.” Quentin, age 16.

“It’s pretty nice to know someone actually cares for you and loves you.” Trevor, age 16.

Trevor, age 16.

“I couldn’t stay at Hearts forever, which is where I really wanted to be.” Tara, age 17

“It really does take a community.” SFFC Host Family

Coming Soon! Safe Families Plus Mentoring Program

“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” John 13:35





**Safe Families
for Children**
A program of
Hearts With A Mission

Safe Families for Children Match Opportunity



Matching Dollar for Dollar

Through a generous match opportunity,
every dollar will be matched up to
\$1,000 per individual.

Join us in multiplying your gift today!

To donate go to
heartswithamission-oregon.funraise.org/

Safe Families for Children is a program
of Hearts With a Mission in Jackson,
Josephine and Lincoln Counties.
(Learn more about SFFC on pgs 6-7)



**HEARTS
WITH-A
MISSION**

The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of
the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'
Matthew 25:40

THANK YOU FOR BEING PART OF OUR HEARTS COMMUNITY

Every Child Deserves a Home

Youth Shelter | Safe Families for Children | Transitional Living Program



SHELTER LOCATIONS

Medford: 517 Edwards St | Grants Pass: 1504 NE 9th St.

TLP PROGRAM | ADMIN OFFICE

521 Edwards St | 529 Edwards St, Medford

MAILING ADDRESS

711 Medford Ctr #334, Medford OR 97504

