Vanessa’s Journey To Independence

Vanessa’s face has been a familiar one at YEAH!, where she has lived on and off for the last couple of years. We are excited to announce that in November of 2018, Vanessa became our first youth from the YEAH! program in Berkeley to enter her own apartment, through the Rapid Re-Housing program offered at Covenant House. Rapid Re-Housing is an intervention designed to help individuals and families that don’t need intensive and ongoing support to quickly exit homelessness and return to permanent housing. Rapid Re-Housing provides financial assistance to cover move-in costs, deposits, and the rental and/or utility assistance (typically six months or less) with case management to support the process, based on the unique needs of the renter.

Our teams at YEAH! and our Rapid Re-Housing Case Manager, Mari, worked together and Vanessa was quickly enrolled in the program. Vanessa shares, “Mari was in touch with me every day. Together, we looked for places to live, and saw 16 units before November 22nd!” Vanessa was surprised and grateful at how hard everyone worked to support her efforts to move into her own place. “I couldn’t believe that Mari was able to convince the landlord to accept my paystubs and references, even though I didn’t have a credit score!”

During the Thanksgiving holiday weekend, the team met with the landlord, inspected the unit, collected the necessary documents to have a check issued for the move-in date of November 27th—Vanessa’s birthday!! She exclaims, “I am thankful to YEAH! for providing me with shelter and love when I needed it, and to Mari at the Cov for helping me find a place to live, and for helping me furnish it. I even bought my very first Christmas tree for my new home!”
The minute you meet Jarekhye, you can’t help but see that he loves his work in service to young people. As our Program Director, Jarekhye oversees the staff and volunteers at YEAH! to ensure that every young person who walks through the doors feels safe and cared for. As a hands-on leader, he is always ready to jump in to see that our young people receive the love, respect and attention they deserve.

Jarekhye loves that YEAH! is a low-barrier shelter—where everyone is welcome. He shares, “It’s so important for the youth to be accepted just as they are, since we are the only emergency shelter in Berkeley for young people. Everyday, I’m inspired by the staff and volunteers that work so hard to help provide the immediate needs of our young people with shelter, food and safety.” However, Jarekhye wants to see more programs and services available for the youth in Berkeley, which requires a larger space. “The youth at YEAH! deserve a permanent space where we can provide them with beds to sleep in and we don’t have to ask them to leave in the morning. I want YEAH! to have the ability to provide services for our youth during the day, including employment and life skills workshops, case management and counseling, and substance use and wellness programs. I know these dreams seem big, but our youth deserve the best we have to offer. Berkeley is a special place, and I believe that if we work together as a community, that anything is possible for the future of YEAH!”

Jarekhye adds, “All of us at YEAH! are looking forward to seeing you at the shelter! Thank you for the continued gifts of your time, resources and love. YEAH! was created, and is still sustained by a passionate community of volunteers that care enough to keep showing up.” For more information on how you can volunteer, please email alinas@yeahberkeley.org.

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**YEAH! & CHC**

On July 1, 2016, YEAH! and Covenant House California announced a merger of their respective programs for homeless youth. The merger expanded both programs’ continuums of care, and collectively provided more robust and sustainable services for homeless youth in the East Bay. With the merger, the agency now has over 80 beds dedicated to Transitional Aged Youth (TAY) in the East Bay, making it the largest provider of homeless youth services in the East Bay.

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**A NIGHT FOR YEAH!**

Honorary Chair, Congresswoman Barbara Lee welcomes you to a night to benefit YEAH!

April 4, 2019
7:00pm

Inspirational Program & Dessert Reception

St. John’s Presbyterian Church
2727 College Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94705

For more information, please visit covenanthousecalifornia.org/nightforyeah

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**Amazon Wish List**

**YEAH! CURRENT WISH LIST ITEMS**

- Hanes White T-shirts, Underwear
- Individually Wrapped Snacks, Toothbrushes, Toothpaste, Deodorant and Cascade

For the full list and how to donate, visit the link below:

http://amzn.com/w/3K77YUG6R4B0W

Thank you for helping our youth!