



A Seed That Was Sown

A Story of Community Support

At 16, Evelyn found her way to The PLACE, suffering through depression, post-traumatic stress disorder due to sexual assault and rejection from her mother and father. She developed a hard exterior to cope with the anger and the distrust she had with any adult figure in her life. "I felt like coming to the shelter was my lowest place, not knowing that it would one day be remembered as the turning point which helped me change my life," Evelyn stated.

Unable to heal from her shame, she attempted to take her own life. After being revived, social services placed her into the foster care system. During this time, Evelyn realized the true power of her intelligence and earned a full-ride scholarship to college in her senior year of high school. After Evelyn turned 18 and graduated from high school, she returned to The PLACE. "The staff offered me more than just physical shelter, they offered me emotional shelter from those who weren't loving. They met me on my journey where I was—stuck in my own self sabotage. They showed me how to use my intelligence to build a new life."



On average, less than 3% of foster kids graduate from a 4-year college. Evelyn has earned her bachelor's degree, as well as her Master's degree. Today you can find Evelyn giving back to her community as an educator. She has also collaborated with The PLACE to educate high school students about the struggles of homeless youth and how we can all work together to support those in need.

She encouraged everyone at the 2021 OFF THE STREET Breakfast that "the most effective way to help people in need is to offer a seed at a time, whether that's a seed of knowledge, a listening ear or financial support. Each of us can offer something, even when it seems small to us. That seed can be the difference between life and death for a hurting person in need."

OFF THE STREET Updates

With the effects of the global pandemic still lingering into 2021, the execution and outcome of this year's OFF THE STREET (OTS) breakfast bred uncertainty. To adapt to the new norm, we decided to host our annual OTS breakfast in person and virtually. This solution allowed guests the face-to-face interaction we've all been craving, while out of state guests were able to view it virtually.

The PLACE holds the OTS breakfast under the Colorado Avenue bridge to bring awareness to the grit and the literal reality of the many youth who find shelter there.

With about 650 guests and table captains in attendance, you helped us raise \$179,675! Thank you all for making a difference in the lives of homeless youth! If you missed out on the fun, you can view the program by visiting <https://theplacecos.org/off-the-street-breakfast-2021/>.



We are so thankful for our annual sponsors. Because of your help, all funds raised were able to go directly to our programs! A special shoutout to the Picnic Basket, who provides and serves delicious breakfast for OFF THE STREET every year. We couldn't do this event without their generosity and care. We are excited to see you all under the bridge in 2022!



OFF THE STREET Updates



The PLACE thanks you for your support!

From the Desk of Shawna Kemppainen, Executive Director

A Place Called HOME

This summer, we asked the 650 guests at our Off The Street breakfast what home meant to them. Folks wrote down a total of 93 different words. The top five were safety, family, love, security, and comfort. Others named belonging, space to dream, memories, laughter, trust, sleep and, (my favorite) good coffee.

Our job is to make more of these words a reality for the 340 young people who are experiencing homelessness in our community right now. Our job, collectively. Young people are trying to find an option to take care of themselves with no trusted, resourced adults to provide backing, belonging, healthcare navigation, tuition or even a safe place to sleep.

In August, I wrote my first \$1000 rent payment check to a landlord for a young person moving into an apartment. With application fees, the total check was for \$2,250. Only 2 percent of apartments in Colorado Springs rent for less than \$1,000 per month, and average rentals rose 15% in the past year.

All young people deserve a safe, decent, and dignified place to live during their transition to adulthood. A space to dream, to heal, and to build independence no matter their economic or health circumstance. That's why we're building what we call

the HOME: Strategy to Action. See the inset on this page.

This strategy prioritizes three initiatives. Before this winter, we will open a **daytime drop-in center** for unsheltered youth to access basic needs such as food, showers, and laundry. Data from our pilot project last winter shows youth are more likely to seek mental health support and help with housing when they have a dedicated, safe space open for multiple hours. The drop-in space will be leased for an interim period while we work on the next initiative.

We must create a better, bigger, **transitional housing center** for young people ages 18 to 21 and for unaccompanied minor youth. Once completed, our Cucharas Street facility becomes the state-of-the-art drop-in center.

Finally, The PLACE has begun the planning the development of a 50-unit, non-limited **supportive housing apartment complex** to be designed with young people, for young people.

Safety, love, security, comfort, family, a space to dream, laughter and trust. Together, we can make these words of hope into HOME for the youth of our community.



HOME: STRATEGY TO ACTION

HOUSING that is safe, stable, and affordable for transition age youth 18 to 24.

ONGOING, positive, equity-based relationships between youth and safe adults, peers and others in the community.

MEANINGFUL inspired futures including goals for education, employment, and community connections for youth.

EMOTIONAL, psychological, physical, and social well-being that helps youth shift their trajectory.

The Happenings

NIGHT OUT PROJECT

November is *National Runaway and Homeless Youth* month. The PLACE's annual Night Out Project is a experiential project that informs the community on the issue of youth homelessness by spending the night out.

This year's Night Out will be held on November 18—19, 2021 at First United Methodist Church. The Night Out Project differs from our Off the Street Breakfast because it is a peer to peer fundraiser. This means that as a sleeper, you would have your very own fundraising page and would ask your network of family, friends and community members to raise funds to move towards ending youth homelessness.

Although we hosted Night Out virtually last year, participants raised \$34,702! We are excited to sleep out in person this year, so if you are interested please contact Nastassia Idahosa at Nastassia.Idahosa@ThePLACEcos.org or 719-338-9257.



EXEMPLARY ENRICHMENT

Did you know that 48% of youth employed at our shelter have maintained their employment for at least 3 months? One of the leading causes of youth losing their jobs is lack of transportation. Thankfully organizations like Kids on Bikes helps us mitigate some of that strain, by donating and repairing bikes for our youth. At the beginning of our fiscal year, The PLACE set a goal that 50% of youth staying at the shelter and receiving employment services will obtain employment. At the end of quarter three, 64% have obtained employment, surpassing our goal!

Self sufficiency can be defined as being able to maintain oneself without outside aid and is our top priority at The PLACE. One way we teach this in our shelter is through our community garden at Bear Creek. Shelter staff gardens on our community plot and uses the produce to teach cooking lessons to shelter youth.

During our most recent session, staff incorporated budgeting lessons and encouraged youth that eating healthy does not have to be expensive. So far, 65% of shelter youth have showed an increase in self-sufficiency through our self sufficiency matrix. We won't stop until 100% do.





423 East Cucharas St
Colorado Springs, CO 80903

Return Service Requested

Coming this Fall

The Drive-In Tasty Freeze 2nd Annual Classic Car Show

This fundraiser benefits The PLACE, Sunday, September 26th, at 2:00 PM

Located at 2309 N Weber St, Colorado Springs, CO 80907

NIGHT OUT Project

Thursday, November 18, beginning at 6:00 PM, First United Methodist Church

For more information, please go to our website at

<https://theplacecos.org/night-out-2021/>

H&H Tire Coat Drive with KILO and RXP

Saturday, November 20, from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM

Located at 5770 S. HWY 85-87, Colorado Springs

The Giving Season

Give! Campaign Launch— Monday, November 1

Empty Stocking Fund — November 2021

Giving Tuesday — November 30

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

BECKY GUNDRUM, MLS, *President*

DOUG PALMER, *President-Elect*

A.J. HOERTH, *Treasurer*

MATT HANE, *Secretary*

MIMI BROWN

BRIAN DESANTIS

MARCUS SHELTON

SHAWNA KEMPPAINEN

Executive Director

THE PATH NEWSLETTER

ANDY PETERSEN

Director of Development

NASTASSIA IDAHOSA

Development Officer