



Growing up, Lyric learned how to be invisible in order to stay safe. Now at Covenant House, he is discovering what it's like to be seen.

## The Magic of Hope: Lyric Defies His Past and Follows His Dream

All of his life, Lyric did everything he could to be invisible. It was easier that way. And safer.

Lyric's mother gave birth to him when she was only 13. She was just a child herself, thrust into motherhood far too early.

She did the best she could to raise him. But it wasn't easy being a young mom without money or a home of her own. For a short time, they moved in with some friends. But then a bad fight broke out, and Lyric and his mom were forced to leave.

This was the pattern of his childhood. They would move from one spot to the next, staying until conflict pushed them out. In all this turmoil, Lyric learned that it was best to stay quiet and ask for nothing.

"I grew up an emotionless kid. To this day, I don't really feel much, because that's where I come from. I come from neglect," he says. "I know my mom did not mean to be neglectful, but still."

As soon as he was old enough, Lyric decided to leave the chaos of his childhood behind him. He wanted to see if he could make it on his own. "I know how to survive on the street without being seen," he says.

But after a life of being invisible, Lyric made the brave choice to reach out for help. He looked up shelters near him. The first place he found was Covenant House New Orleans.

When he called Covenant House, staff told him to come right over — no questions asked. For the first time, Lyric felt truly welcomed and seen.

**"When I walk into Covenant House, I feel like I can be free and I can be me. I've never really had that type of support."**

— Lyric

When staff learned Lyric dreamed of becoming a barber, they made sure he had his very first



As an Open Arms Society member, you are making substantial lasting change in the lives of homeless young people.

I'm not exaggerating when I say that. You may remember that, in 2023, we introduced our strategic vision to end youth homelessness as we know it. It's called The Journey Home.

This road map consists of three pathways: Prevention, Intervention, and Restoration. Through our decades of experience with youth homelessness and our dedicated research, we believe these three pathways will reduce youth homelessness.

And it's friends like you who help turn this vision into a reality.

Every time you share your generosity with us, you are supporting the Journey Home for thousands of young people.

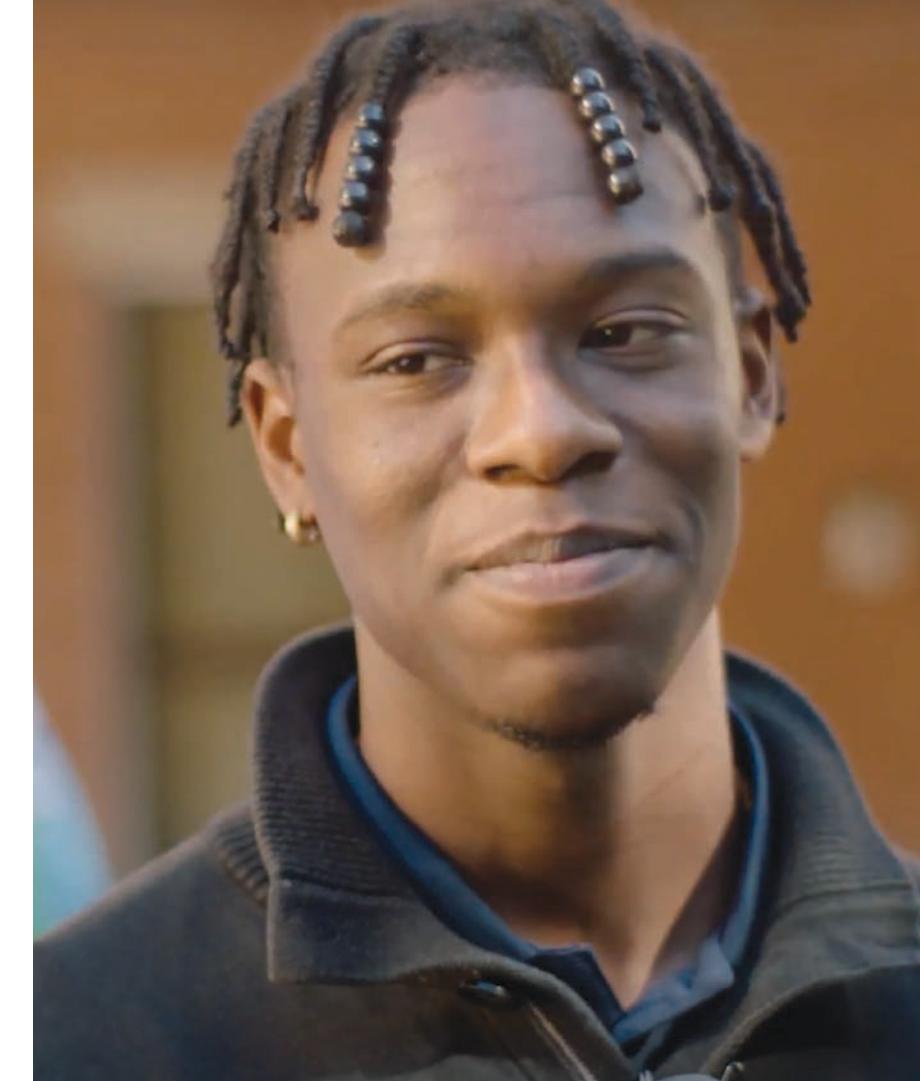
You support Prevention — programs that help prevent youth from entering homelessness in the first place.

You support Intervention — like our street outreach and emergency shelter, which get young people off the streets and into a safe place.

You support Restoration — like our new affordable-for-youth housing, which helps youth permanently escape homelessness.

In the end, you support promising futures. Thank you for all that you do for our young people.

  
William "Bill" Bedrossian  
President and CEO



Today, Lyric is pulling off his greatest magic trick yet. He is building his career and his independence thanks to your support.

*Lyric's story cont.*

## Finding Independence

pair of clippers. For Lyric, cutting hair feels like a way he can make an impact in other's lives. "It's kind of like a magic trick, because the client gets in one way and comes out a whole different other way. It changes their whole mood."

Today, Lyric is continuing to work on his skills as a barber. Thanks to the support of kindhearted friends like you, he knows he is on the right track to independence. "I'm not homeless, I would say, because I've been at Covenant House, and that feels like home," he explains.

**“I would say I'm not independent, but we're working on it. Some tricks take time.”**

— Lyric

## A Consistent Presence

If it's a Thursday, you will likely find Kailyn Hooley in the Art Room at Covenant House Alaska's Youth Engagement Center — just as she has been for the past two years. Each week, she uses art and creative expression to help youth on their healing journey.

As an artist herself, Kailyn understands the healing power of creativity. "Art is my outlet, my way of processing," she shares. "It's really healing, and it's cool to see how other people are able to use art as a healing method as well."

Kailyn believes that everyone is an artist. She also believes in the power of showing up. For Kailyn, volunteering isn't just about teaching art — it's about building trust and being a reliable presence in the lives of young people who have often experienced instability.

This was exemplified in a recent experience with a new resident. Kailyn and the young person spent hours in conversation while building a mixed-media collage together. "At the end, just the talking left the youth from being really upset and struggling to leaving with a smile on their face," Kailyn recalls.

Every week Kailyn shows up is more proof to our young people that they matter. We are grateful for volunteers like her, who make a positive impact on our youth.

## DONOR SPOTLIGHT

### Creating the Future He Wants



Bill Martz first encountered Covenant House as a young man just starting out in New York City. On his daily commute, he noticed the number of homeless youth on the streets. When he read an article about Covenant House, he was struck by our mission.

As a chemical engineer, Bill appreciates analysis and thoughtful problem-solving. He saw these values in our approach to youth homelessness.

He is especially impressed with our recently developed vision, The Journey Home. "It just struck me, wow, the analysis that went into this to try to understand the roots of the problem and then how, beyond providing a safe place to sleep, you help these kids transform into happy and productive adults," he says.

For Bill, our vision of a future without youth homelessness aligned with his own. To help build that future, he included us in his estate plan.

For those thinking about their own legacy, Bill advises them to "consider the future you want to help bring about, the future you want to be a part of in some way, through your gift."



Kailyn Hooley shares her passion for art at Covenant House Alaska. Her consistent presence and teaching opens doors to healing and creativity for our youth.



Ximena, her mother, and her younger sister. Faces have been blurred for their protection.

## From Crisis to Recovery: Covenant House Guatemala Helps a Family Heal

Standing in court, Ximena and her mother were about to face a heartbreak question. Looking at Ximena's mother, the judge asked if she was capable of taking care of her teenage daughter. "No," she answered, eyes downcast.

The family was in crisis. Ximena's mother, who experienced sexual violence growing up, struggled with depression. Her husband, Ximena's father, lost his job during the pandemic, which drove him to substance abuse and violent outbursts.

Among all this volatility, Ximena thought she had found a way out. When she was just 15 years old, she received a message on social media from a 28-year-old man from her community. He groomed her and manipulated her into a relationship.

Eventually, he convinced her to run away with him. When she returned home, Ximena told her mother everything. Concerned for her child's safety, she filed a complaint.

Ximena was back home, but the harassment didn't stop. The man was well-liked in the community, and his friends and family blamed Ximena for everything that happened. They threatened her and pressured her mother to withdraw the complaint.

The family wasn't safe. When their case got to the judge, Ximena's mother answered truthfully that she was unable to care for her daughter. That's when the judge decided to send Ximena to our shelter.

For over a year, Ximena stayed with us, where she was safe and free from her abuser. In our care, she received medical care, therapy, education, and legal advocacy. Thanks to her legal team, Ximena's abuser was convicted of rape and sentenced to eight years in prison.

But our support didn't stop there. We believe lasting healing is best achieved when the whole family is involved. We helped relocate Ximena's family, and our social work and psychology teams ensured she had a stable home environment to return to.

Today, Ximena is almost 18. Living with her family, she is studying accounting and is looking forward to her future — a future you helped make possible with your support.



### February 17 is Random Acts of Kindness Day

#### **Donate During Our Match Campaign:**

At Covenant House, we have seen how one simple act of kindness can change a life. Every year on Random Acts of Kindness Day, your kindness goes even further.

Give a gift on February 17, and it will be matched 4X! Quadruple your generosity at [covenanthouse.org/random-acts-of-kindness](https://covenanthouse.org/random-acts-of-kindness).

