



When Rashyah couldn't take the arguments and hurt from her mother any longer, she left home and her hopes behind. For weeks, she lived out of her car just trying to survive, until you gave her a safe place to turn to.

The Power of Being Seen: You Showed Rashyah She Wasn't Alone

Exhausted from a double shift and studying for her college classes, Rashyah walked into her home hoping that, for once, it wouldn't feel like a battlefield.

But it did. Day after day, the fights with her mom grew worse. Home wasn't safe, and the chaos was close to breaking her. So Rashyah made a heartbreaking decision.

"Help me put my stuff in the car. I'm not coming back," she told her brother. That night, Rashyah got a hotel room. It was the last bed she was going to sleep in for a while.

For the next two weeks, Rashyah kept herself moving. During the day, as a social work intern, she was intervening in court cases and teaching life skills to youth in residential care. At night, she delivered food to scrape together enough gas money.

After that, she'd clock in for the third shift at a group home, and when the sun came up, sneak

into her office to nap for two hours in a chair.

"I had no bed. No shower. No quiet corner of the world that felt like mine," Rashyah reflects. "Until Covenant House."

Rashyah was exhausted when she stumbled upon our website. Something in her told her not to call, to just go. So she showed up at our front door.

"They handed me clean linens, a private room, and something I hadn't felt in months: dignity," Rashyah says. "I took a hot shower and fell into a bed that didn't require explanation."

For the first time since she left home, Rashyah was able to rest. To process her grief. To heal. "I didn't have to sleep in my car with the seats reclined. I didn't have to calculate which gym I could sneak into for a rinse. I didn't have to perform strength while silently breaking."



Right now, some of the youth in our care are gearing up for an exciting milestone: graduation.

But what comes after graduation for a young person facing homelessness? As they cross that stage to receive their diploma, the path toward independence and safety becomes all the more clear.

As a member of the Open Arms Society, you have invested into the futures of our youth. One way you have done so is by supporting The Journey Home.

The Journey Home is our most comprehensive road map to ending youth homelessness as we know it. As a part of this initiative, we focus on restorative measures, which help break cycles of homelessness and keep youth off the street for good.

Education plays a major role in this because it opens doors for stable employment. As a part of The Journey Home, we offer education programs such as tutoring, GED support, and college application assistance.

With your generous support, we can help the youth in our care achieve their education goals and launch into careers that build stable futures. Thank you for making it possible for them to achieve their greatest dreams!

William “Bill” Bedrossian
President and CEO



Today, as a social worker, Rashyah helps youth who are facing the struggles she once did. To them, she is the voice that says, “You’re not alone,” the same words you told her when she was at her lowest.

Rashyah’s story cont.

Your Support Lives On

Because of your support, Rashyah got the care she needed to focus on her future. She finally felt seen — not as a problem to fix, but as a person with potential.

While in our care, Rashyah was able to graduate college with a degree in social work. The place where she interned offered her a full-time position, seeing in her the potential we also saw.

Today, Rashyah shows up day after day for youth in need, being to them the safe place she never had growing up. Until you gave it to her.

She credits caring people like you with her second chance.

“You may never see all the results. You may never hear all the stories. But I promise you this: Your support is not wasted. It lives in me, in the youth I serve.”

— Rashyah

Making Birthdays Special

Everyone deserves to be celebrated, especially on their birthday. That is the belief that led Meredith Basdaras to join the Birthday Club at Covenant House Alaska (CHA).

“I love my birthday; I will celebrate it till I am dead,” Meredith laughs. And it’s not just her day that matters. Since she first started volunteering with the Birthday Club, she has made 19 birthdays special for the youth in our care.

But even before then, her journey with CHA began in the kitchen, volunteering alongside her mother. “I have a really good memory of my mom and I volunteering together, and I think that was my first time seeing how wonderful the youth are here,” Meredith recalls.

Meredith’s dedication to helping others is rooted in her own experiences growing up in poverty, which fostered a deep empathy in her. Her history gives her a unique understanding of the troubles our youth face.

And it’s why she knows that, when times are hard, celebrations matter more than ever. Whether she is bringing in a homemade cake or carefully selected store-bought treats, Meredith knows how to make every young person feel special.

Much like a candle on a cake, Meredith is shining a light for our youth. On their birthdays and every day in between.



For Meredith, volunteering is about building a stronger community. She believes that if more people contribute even a little time and effort, the collective impact can be tremendous.

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

The Door She Never Entered, but Always Believed In



Dana knows from personal experience how important support can be. After growing up in a home filled with physical and emotional abuse, she ran away at the age of 13.

While she never stayed at our shelter, Dana said just knowing we were there was a comfort. “I knew where Covenant House was, and many times I made it to the door, but never went inside.”

Nevertheless, she says, “I knew it was there, and that was very hopeful to me. I always knew I could go there.”

While Dana eventually found her way to a group home, where she lived until she was 18, she heard from friends of hers about the kind and attentive care they received at Covenant House. Their stories always stuck with her.

After building a life of her own, when the time came to give back, Dana chose us. As she incorporates Covenant House into her estate plans, she says, “It helps to know I will be part of someone else’s story. They will never know my name, but they will know someone is here to support them.”



From High School to the Rest of Their Lives: Providing Support to Graduation and Beyond

The journey to adulthood is challenging for any young person, but for students facing homelessness, the path is often fraught with additional hurdles.

When many of our young people first come through our doors, graduation — whether from high school, a high school equivalency program, or college — feels beyond reach.

But we know how important education is in breaking cycles of homelessness and poverty. That's why we offer educational support programs at our shelters.

For Moongélina, our programs not only helped her graduate, but pushed her to believe in herself. "The support I got from my tutor, my teacher, and the Covenant House staff just gave me the motivation to do it," she says.

With the support you helped make possible, Moongélina not only completed her GED studies — she excelled.

She received the Perseverance Award for demonstrating commitment, pride, and a positive attitude, even during one of the most challenging times in her life.

Now Moongélina is preparing for college this fall, where she plans to study physiology. Her dream? To start her own program someday and give back to Covenant House for all they've done for her.

Graduation is just the beginning. Covenant House continues to provide a safety net for youth like Moongélina, helping with college applications and financial aid, and providing a safe place for them to return to during summer breaks.

And when they head off to their first year of college, we provide them with an initial care package with school and dorm supplies so they have everything they need to succeed.

Moongélina's story, along with so many others, is one of resilience, hope, and the power of unwavering support. With Covenant House by their sides, our youth can build the future they never thought possible.



Make Moves for Homeless Youth

In the U.S., 40% of youth facing homelessness identify as LGBTQ+.

Join Strides for Pride this June, and move 40 minutes a day for one week to raise \$120 or more in support of LGBTQ+ youth overcoming homelessness at Covenant House.

Go to **covenanthouse.org/strides-for-pride** to find out how you can get involved!

