

# youth homes news

## The Youth Homes Organic Garden Program ... growing healthy adults

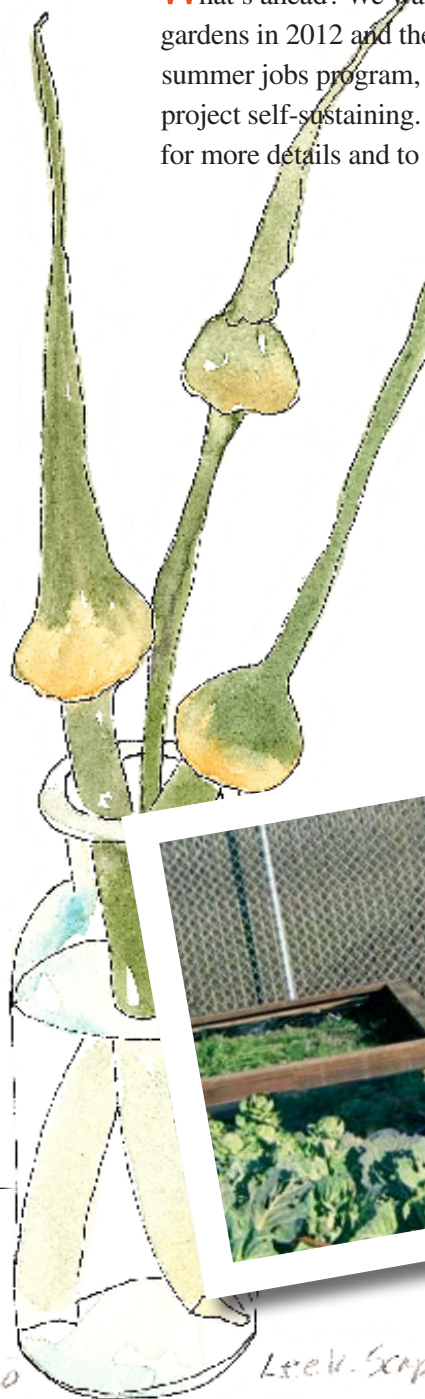
In September of 2010, Youth Homes launched a unique, hands-on program designed to nurture our youth and feed our community. *The Youth Homes Organic Garden and Job Readiness Program* was created as an opportunity for our residents to step outside and get their hands dirty while gaining critical job skills. Under the guidance of Youth Homes Clinical Director Julie Sievenpiper, the kids will learn everything about the basics of gardening, from sustainability and organic horticulture to the sale of produce to restaurants and farmers markets. Participants will develop essential employment skills like communication, leadership, punctuality, and for some, the satisfaction of earning a first paycheck!

Staff, supported by Eco-psychology intern Lily Troung, Peer Mentor Zack Walton, and Youth Homes Alumni, meets weekly with our kids for lessons on sustainable gardening and nutrition while working directly in the gardens. Master Gardener Sydney Spencer volunteers her time to provide horticulture expertise. In June, the program will expand to function as a summer work project, with four residential foster teens employed as gardeners. Their responsibilities will include completing shifts, following directions from a supervisor, and maintaining accurate accounts of hours worked.

What's ahead? We want to double the size of the gardens in 2012 and the number of kids in our summer jobs program, with the goal of making this project self-sustaining. Go to [www.youthhomes.org](http://www.youthhomes.org) for more details and to find out how you can help.

—Nedda Janatpour

*So are the kids on board? Ken exclaimed, "I made tomato sauce for pizza outta stuff from the garden!" Chelsea picked fresh chives for her Sunday omelet and Sam sums it up with, "I like the garden. It's pretty chill."*



Alumni Kellie Patterson and Intern Lily Troung tend the garden



ky 2010

Leek Scapes - Blossoms

# letter from

Our Executive Director, Stuart McCullough

## Dear Friends

At Youth Homes, we are committed to ensure that our kids are ready for life and will have the tools and skills necessary to succeed in the workforce. Increased family participation, improvement in academic achievement, and getting our teens thinking clearly about what they need to do to be “job ready” are critical goals for all of our staff.

Working is not an option for many 18-21 year old foster kids; it is a fact of life. Foster youth are more likely to have low paying jobs, poor working conditions, and are less likely to be gainfully employed as they get older.

How to ready our kids for the future? As a vehicle to promote healing and teach valuable skills, we have established a gardening program in two of our homes and plan to expand to all of our residences by summer.

Our youth are learning the importance of good nutrition, how to build something from scratch and that success in the garden comes from self-discipline, problem-solving and team work. They will gain skills to bring to the outside workplace, such as a positive work ethic, communication, and coping skills.

At the Contra Costa Council annual meeting, Sunne Wright McPeak, President and CEO of California Emerging Technology Fund, cited five aspects to make California’s government work; health status going up, improve education, decrease in poverty, reduce crime and a steady increase in jobs.

Those are exactly Youth Homes goals for each resident of our program and I am proud to say that we can demonstrate our success in these



areas. Youth Homes results are independently verified, making a solid case we are a good investment for both public and private supporters.

We are our kids’ champions and advocates, working to heal the wounds that come from a young life of repeated trauma and abandonment. That work could not be done without your support. Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stuart McCullough". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Sincerely,  
Stuart McCullough

Save the Date:  
**YOUTH HOMES  
THIRD ANNUAL GALA**

October 29, 2011, 6:00 PM

NEW venue! Exciting Entertainment!  
More details to come!

Announcing early sponsorship opportunities with promotional benefits. Contact Kathy Bowles: 925-933-2627.

Committee and event volunteers are welcome!  
If interested, please contact Barbara Bernasek  
at [barbara@bernasek.com](mailto:barbara@bernasek.com) or 925-944-0725,  
or June Krug at [j.krug@astound.net](mailto:j.krug@astound.net)  
or 925-943-1882.

# meet the STAFF



## Johnna Standley, Youth Advocate

Even at age 25, Johnna Standley brings great life and professional experience to her assignment as our newest Youth Advocate. Born in Oakland, Johnna became a foster youth at age 6 when she was placed with her biological aunt. Not an ideal situation, Johanna toughed it out until after high school graduation, when she found herself homeless and staying on a friend's couch, at a boyfriend's apartment, and even in the back seat of her car.

Determined to turn her life around, Johnna joined the military when she was 19 years old. She spent the next several months in Reserves Basic Training with the goal of becoming a human resource specialist. She went on to attend Napa Valley College, receiving a degree in social and behavioral studies.

Johnna, along with Jeremy Gaebe, work tirelessly with foster youth ages 17 and up to help them transition out of a group home setting. From finding housing to completing job applications, from assistance with financial aid to organizing peer support groups, the entire team is dedicated to these kids as they "age out" of the system.

"Youth Homes is not just about keeping a roof over the kids' heads," declares Johnna. "We care deeply about each of our youth, and we work together to figure out what is best for them. We listen...we build bonds."

Because of her experience at Youth Homes, Johnna plans to attend Cal State East Bay in the fall to complete her sociology major.

—Nedda Janatpour

### YOUTH HOMES

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Walnut Creek, CA 94596  
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Fax: 925-933-5824  
Email: [help@youthhomes.org](mailto:help@youthhomes.org)  
Web: [www.youthhomes.org](http://www.youthhomes.org)

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### STAFF

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### GOING GREEN

Want to reduce your carbon footprint? You can subscribe to receive our monthly emails, annual reports and newsletters. Go to [www.youthhomes.org](http://www.youthhomes.org) and click "Subscribe." Thank you for helping us keep our costs down! The money we save will help fund our valuable programs.



### FIND US ON FACEBOOK

Not a member of the Youth Homes Facebook community? Go to [Facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com) and find us today!

### WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

Are you interested in learning how your gifts and talents can be put to use as a volunteer? Opportunities include event planning, fundraising, mailing parties, work at the Auxiliary thrift shop, and residence improvements. For more information contact Leslie Harman: 925-933-2627 or [LeslieH@youthhomes.org](mailto:LeslieH@youthhomes.org)

# the living legends of youth homes

Suppose you could do something heroic for young people at risk? Something that would “do good” today and into the future as far as anyone can see?

**you can . . .** *by becoming a member of the Living Legends Circle.* Your contribution to the Youth Homes endowment fund ensures that for generations to come, abused and neglected foster youth will have access to the support they need to pursue independent lives.

Here are 5 simple things you can do to leave a legacy to Youth Homes:

1. Include a bequest for Youth Homes in your *will or living trust*. This is the simplest and quickest way to make a gift.
2. Name Youth Homes as a beneficiary of your *retirement plan or IRA*.
3. Name Youth Homes as the beneficiary of your *existing life insurance policy*.
4. Consider using *appreciated assets* — like securities or real estate — for an outright gift and reduce the cost of giving.
5. Depending on how it is structured, establishing a *charitable trust* can provide you with an immediate charitable deduction or a charitable deduction for your estate.

Donors who remember Youth Homes in their estate plans are Living Legend members and will be honored annually for their vision, generosity and commitment to children.

To learn more, contact Youth Homes at 925-933-2627.



Youth Homes, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization committed to serving the needs of abused and neglected children and adolescents in California's San Francisco Bay Area. We provide intensive residential treatment programs and community-based counseling services that promote the healing process for seriously emotionally abused and traumatized children and adolescents.



# YOUTH HOMES AUXILIARY

## news

### YOUTH HOMES AUXILIARY FASHION SHOW

#### **“Life’s A Party” and you’re invited!**

*Serving Brunch, Fashions  
and More!*

#### **When?**

Saturday, April 16, 2011-10:30 a.m.

#### **Where?**

Crow Canyon Country Club,  
Danville

#### **Tickets:**

\$40 (\$13 tax deductible)

#### **Contact:**

s-fulcher@comcast.net  
or 925-930-9366

#### **Featuring:**

Fashions from *Misto Lino* (“Live  
the Life You Love”), *Draper’s and  
Damon’s* (trendy, essential styles  
you love to live in), and *Jos.A.Bank*  
(men’s wear — tailored, casual,  
and accessories).

**Did you know** the Youth  
Homes Auxiliary has been the largest  
annual donor to Youth Homes for the  
last 35 years? Our Thrift Shop, located  
at 5 Vivian Drive #C in Pleasant Hill,  
has been the key to our success. And,  
starting in March, the shop will accept  
credit card payments!

Look for monthly and other special  
sales on our website:

<http://www.youthhomesauxiliary.org>,  
or call Bernice Ely, Thrift Shop  
Manager, at 925-798-5561 with  
questions.

Bernice, a committed Auxiliary  
member since 1996, recently stepped

down from her role as President,  
although she will continue as the  
Thrift Shop manager. On behalf of our  
members, I would like to extend our  
heartfelt appreciation to Bernice for  
her dedication to the Auxiliary and the  
foster children we serve.

Special events are also integral to our  
financial success. Our 17th annual  
fashion show will be held in April. We  
depend solely on volunteers to staff the  
Thrift Shop and our many yearly events.

Give back, support foster kids, get  
involved, give us a call.

*Sandra O. Abram  
President, Youth Homes Auxiliary*

## HIGHLIGHTS:

# Community Support

### A note from Mark J. Hanna, Chairman and CEO of Hanna Global Solutions, Concord, CA

Back in Thanksgiving 2004, our employees decided to raise funds through payroll deduction with the express intent of using the proceeds to “adopt a family.” Coincidentally, we were introduced to Youth Homes, specifically to the East Bay Shelter run by Rob Rawlings. We found our “family” in need!

Upon learning of the positive results at the shelter and how group foster homes operate “below the radar,” our employees became even more enthusiastic about raising money and providing for the kids during Christmas and throughout the year with Birthday Gift Cards. Our management team is proud of our employees’ dedication

and so, in addition to annual holiday and birthday fundraising efforts, we donate computer equipment and furniture. In 2010 we were a major sponsor of the Art of Hope Gala and recommended Youth Homes for a grant from an industry foundation.

I am especially touched by the work done by Youth Homes as I am the proud father of a young man who came to me by way of a group foster home after being

orphaned in a small village in Ethiopia. I know first-hand how important and necessary a stable home is, where no one gives up on a child.



*Mark Hanna presents the MDRT Foundation check to Youth Homes president Tim McCreery*

**Brad Holsworth** and the CPA firm Burr Pilger Mayer, Inc. adopted 7 Aftercare youth ages 18-21 for the holidays. Yummy bake sales and unique raffles provided the funds to fill stockings with those essentials we often take for granted.



*Youth Homes staff accept stockings from Burr Pilger Mayer staff*

**Harvest Church** generously provided Thanksgiving feasts for our **Aftercare** youth ages 18-23 who otherwise would not have enjoyed a holiday meal. And the **Harvest Church Youth Group** held a fabulous clothing bazaar for our teens serving up pizza, refreshments, music, clothing, shoes and handbags!

**Jory Sandusky with Morgan Stanley** organized **Bikes for Tots** for kids in the East Bay. Four kids from our Foster Families ages 3-12 were the lucky recipients.

**Alamo Women’s Club, Cindy Chan and Roxanne Whitbeck** joined our beloved **Youth Homes Auxiliary** in making every resident in our homes feel special this holiday season with thoughtful gifts from our kids’ wish lists, each beautifully wrapped.

A big thank you to our neighborhood friends and businesses for their continuing support of Youth Homes. Following are a few recent highlights.

**Generous funding** from the **S.D.Bechtel, Jr. Foundation, Thomas J. Long Foundation, Mervyn L. Brenner Foundation, St. John's Volunteers, Wells Fargo Foundation and the MDRT Foundation** provided the base of support to expand our Aftercare services and increase the number of youth we serve in the program.

**Brandt and Amy Williams** wanted to give a meaningful gift to their godchildren over the holiday season. Youth Homes materials were sent off to Colorado to Kate, Meriel and Mallory, along with the request that their parents sit down with their kids, watch the video, and then discuss the needs of foster children within their own community. And in their honor, a donation was made to Youth Homes. A gift multiplied many times over!

**Absolute Center**, a Pilates, yoga and fitness studio in downtown Lafayette, celebrates their anniversary by thanking the community for their support by giving back to those in need. They call the event **Paying it Forward**, and this year Youth Homes is one of two beneficiaries of the proceeds from the event.

Visit Absolute Center from March 7-11th and take part in their fitness festivities. There will be raffles to win free classes, demonstrations on the latest Core Align equipment, discounts on their boutiques items, and special fitness packages.

For more information about Absolute Center and **Paying it Forward**, or for class schedules, email [inquiries@absolutecenter.net](mailto:inquiries@absolutecenter.net) or call 925-299-9642. Absolute Center is located at 3658 Mt. Diablo Blvd. in Lafayette.



*The Absolute Center staff*



## OUR WISH LIST

**Our kids and homes are always in need of...**

- Arts and crafts supplies
- 
- Board games
- 
- Gift cards to restaurants, retail stores, and movie theatres
- 
- Large duffle bags and backpacks
- 
- New silverware
- 
- New towels and linens (twin sized beds)
- 
- Portable CD and MP3 players
- 
- Clock radios
- 
- Scrapbooks and writing journals (blank)
- 
- Tickets to zoos, museums, aquariums, theatre, etc.

## 2010 Gala Success

Thanks to the commitment of over 40 volunteers, the dedication of staff, and the incredible generosity of our donors and sponsors, over \$90,000 in net proceeds was raised at our Annual Gala to help the foster children and families we serve 365 days a year.

### Special Thanks to:

*Emcee:* Barrett Lindsay Steiner  
*Auctioneer:* Bob Cushman  
*Special Guest:* Antwone Fisher  
*Co-chairs:* Barbara Bernasek  
and June Krug

### Art of Hope Event Sponsors:

Tom and Karen Mulvaney

### Business Sponsors:

21st Century Sounds  
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Contra Costa Times  
Denelect Alarm  
Diablo Magazine  
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Minuteman Press  
Peterson, Skolnick & Dodge  
R&D Commercial Properties  
Shell Oil Refineries  
Wells Fargo  
WildPackets, Inc  
Workday, Inc.

### Individual Sponsors:

Diane Azaro-Barbera  
Whiff & Shelly Collins  
Lorna H. Martyn  
Mike & Susan Oyama  
Mary P. Sullivan  
Gottfried & Janet Tittiger  
Ron & Lona Wyatt



**We look forward to seeing you at our Third Annual Gala, October 29, 2011!**

*Raffle Girls Jessica Alvarado and Perri Williams  
encouraged Gala attendees to enter the 52 card raffle*