YOUTH OREGON UNITED

Y.O.U.'S NETWORK OF COMMUNITY-BASED AND STATEWIDE PROVIDERS IS CENTERED ON ACHIEVING HOUSING STABILITY AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES, AND YOUNG ADULTS BY EMPOWERING YOUNG PERSONS' OWNERSHIP OF THEIR VOICE AND ACHIEVEMENT OF SYSTEMS CHANGE FOR HIGHER QUALITY RESULTS.

Volume 004 | MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | 18 September, 2026

Real Stories of Housing & Hope: Hayden's Story

Location : Malheur County, OR **Provider (s):** Community in Action (CinA)

When Hayden first came to Youth in Action in February 2026, he was seeking help finding safe housing. Coming from an unsafe situation, he knew he needed support and was ready to take steps toward a more stable future.

After his initial intake with a Youth Advocate, Hayden was placed in CinA's tiny homes shelter. With support from his advocates, Janneatte, he began working toward his goal of securing permanent housing.

During his time in the tiny homes, Hayden took an active role in creating his path toward stability. He completed housing applications, connected with community resources, and participated in opportunities designed to build independence, including **drivers' education**, **Ready-to-Rent** classes, and **financial budgeting** courses.

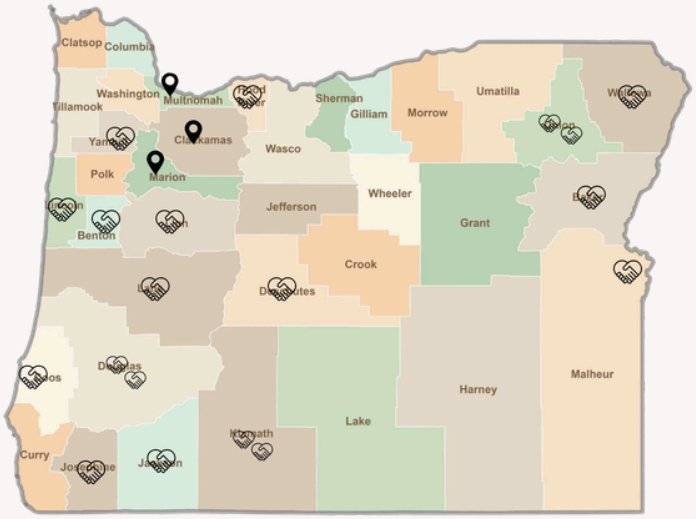
His hard work paid off. Just two months after entering the tiny homes, Hayden transitioned into permanent housing in April 2026. Youth in Action provided additional support to help make the transition successful, including furniture, a security deposit, and his first month's rent.

When asked what Youth in Action meant to him, Hayden shared:

"Youth In Action has been a tool that has helped a young adult like me who doesn't have any other support reach my goals."

Hayden continues working with his Youth Advocate as he builds toward long-term stability and hopes to remain involved with Youth in Action. For him, the program has provided more than resources—it has provided support, guidance, and an opportunity to work toward the goals he set for himself.

Hayden's story is a powerful reminder of what can happen when young people have the support, resources, and opportunities they need to move forward.



The Oregon Impact

Across the state, a network of partners are working together as a united front to move Oregon forward. Partners are showing up for one another and most importantly showing up for youth.

Network Partner

Provider Partner

Check the map and see if your community is united!

Get United! (503)910-4826 morgan@caporegon.org thomas@peaceathome.com

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Volume 004 **MONTHLY NEWSLETTER** 18 September, 2026

Youth Council Spotlight:
Young Roots Oregon: Parent Voices Council



Name : Parent Voices Council
Location : Linn & Benton Counties
Ages : Pregnant and parenting adolescents ages teen to 24 years old and their children.
Frequency : 3x per year
Membership : Varies; Avg. 20+ youth
Compensation per youth : Varies

At Young Roots Oregon, parents aren't simply invited to share their opinions—they are creating the space where parent voices can shape programs, services, and communities.

The Parent Voices Council is a **peer-led group** with no staff participating in the council itself. Parents bring their own experiences, ideas, and expertise to conversations about what is working well, what could be improved, and what they would like to see changed or added in their communities.

The council meets three times a year and includes both English- and Spanish-speaking sessions, with approximately 11 parents participating in each session. The council is supported by bilingual peers, including a bilingual peer who has been involved for about three years and works in childcare, as well as another bilingual peer who serves as secretary.

A key part of the council's approach is **recognizing that parents' time and expertise have value**. Participants are compensated for their time on the council and for completing surveys. Depending on the contract, parents may receive $30-$50 gift cards through funding such as the Family Support and Connections program with ODHS Self-Sufficiency. Food is also provided during sessions.

The council provides opportunities for parents to influence more than just Young Roots Oregon's work. Members are connected with local and statewide surveys, community engagement opportunities, and conversations about systems of care. **Organizations such as Early Learning Hubs and other community partners have also come to the council to listen directly to parents and learn from their experiences.**

The council also incorporates peer-to-peer mentoring and relationship building, including opportunities to connect mothers with mothers and fathers with fathers. While engaging fathers consistently can be a challenge, the goal is to create spaces where parents can connect with others who share similar experiences and strengthen their social support networks.

Each year, the council also conducts a larger survey at the end of the calendar year, giving parents another opportunity to provide feedback and identify priorities.
At its heart, the Parent Voices Council is about more than collecting feedback. It is about creating meaningful opportunities for parents to lead, connect, be heard, and influence the systems and communities around them.

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Provider Spotlight: Alternative Youth Activities (AYA)

Location : Coos & Curry Counties
Ages serviced : 16-24 with wraparound services for families
Key Youth Programs : Employment/workforce development, education, trades, and housing



Sometimes creating new opportunities for young people means looking at an **existing space and imagining what it could become.**

That is exactly what **Alternative Youth Activities (AYA)** has done in Coos Bay. On September 15, AYA celebrated the grand opening of **Lighthouse**, its newest **transitional housing program** located at the former Belloni Ranch on Karl Road.

The lighthouse facility will provide **transitional housing for young families and pregnant youth**, creating a **safe and supportive place where young people and their children can build stability while working toward greater independence**. Director Bell of Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) was also in attendance to celebrate the opening.

Lighthouse includes **10 residential units with capacity for up to 24 beds**. The program will include a house manager along with **live-in residential support**, providing an additional layer of connection and stability for residents. The live-in role is designed to **provide a consistent presence in the home without replacing the professional staff and community partners who will provide services and support to residents.**

Programs specifically designed around the housing and support needs of pregnant and parenting youth remain relatively **uncommon**, particularly in rural communities. Lighthouse gives AYA another way to help young families remain together while building the skills, resources, and support systems they need for their future.

But the story is about more than 10 units and 24 beds.

The former Belloni Ranch is a well-known local property. Through Lighthouse, AYA is helping write a **new chapter for the property, one centered on young people, families, stability, and opportunity.**

For Scott Cooper, Executive Director of Alternative Youth Activities, this kind of work reflects the organization's willingness to think outside the box when it comes to meeting the needs of young people. When asked what comes next, Cooper pointed to another unconventional idea AYA is exploring: **monolithic domes**, stay tuned for AYA's next housing adventure!

Thinking creatively and finding new ways to get things done is part of how AYA approaches its work. From transforming an existing property into Lighthouse to exploring innovative approaches to future housing, AYA continues to look for solutions that work for young people and families in rural Oregon. **Lighthouse represents a new beginning, not just for a property, but for the young people and families who will call it home.**

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Teachable Takeaway: Reaching Teens AI Guidance

What is Reaching Teens?
Reaching Teens is an on-line learning platform and curriculum curated by the American Academy of Pediatrics under the supervision of Dr. Kenneth Ginsburg. YOU providers have recognized the strength of the tool to unify the quality of our practices working with clients across the state. The platform includes an AI tool to provide immediate guidance of the vast library of professional development concepts.



This month's newsletter features Hayden and his transition from an unsafe situation into a housing program with direct support. We prompted the AI navigator about the best ways to support an older teen leaving an unsafe situation and entering transitional housing. Here is one section of the response from the Reaching Teens AI navigator:

Since this youth has just transitioned into housing, this maps closely onto the "extrication" stage of leaving street/unstable life.

Housing first is appropriate regardless of other risk factors. Obtaining housing first is an appropriate goal for youth at all stages, regardless of risk behaviors. Youth experiencing homelessness and unstable housing who may be most open to intervention and outreach are those in transitional stages (first-on-the-street and disequilibrium) and extrication, a stage that offers a window of opportunity for removal from street life.

Mentoring is often necessary to sustain the shift. To leave the street, a youth must reverse the process of initiation by finding a niche in the mainstream economy, achieving a mainstream identity, forming ties with healthy peers, and leading a less substance-dependent existence. Just as youth are mentored into street life, extrication may also require mentoring.

Actively build mainstream skills and network. For youth to become "mainstream smart," they need to be exposed to the skills required to thrive in the mainstream. For youth at all stages, helping youth create and/or maintain social network contacts in the mainstream can protect youth from high-risk behaviors and their consequences.

Use any presenting need as a doorway to deeper connection. A youth presenting to care for an immediate need, even an illness, represents a window of opportunity to reconnect to services and maybe, ultimately, to family or housed contacts.

CHECK IT OUT!

SchoolHouse Connection is offering a webinar on Building School-Shelter Partnerships to Support Children and Families **September 24**!

Register here!

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Scan the QR code & get YOUnited!