

March 2011

FRIENDS FOR YOUTH

Mission:

To Mentor Youth
through Friendship
in the Spirit of Christ



THE LIGHT I SEE IN YOU

We are always looking for opportunities to tell the youth we mentor about the good things we see in them. We see “light” in them, even when their lives often seem so dark and full of despair.

In our Success Journey Mentoring Program, we intentionally allow our mentors the opportunity to speak life and affirmation into the lives of our youth through an activity called, “The Light I See in You”. After getting to know one another in our group setting, every mentor tells about the light they see in each of the youth.

After participating in this activity, one young man said, “That means a lot to me, because my dad was never around and when he was - he still wasn’t really around. He never said anything positive to me. **This is the first time someone has done this for me.** It means a lot that you come [to Rites of Passage] to get to know us and you don’t even get paid. I just want to thank you.”

Success Journey Mentee



To get involved in our next Success Journey Group, please contact us.

There are many young men waiting for someone to tell them about “the light I see in you”.

When approached about being a mentor in the SJ program, I was enthusiastic, but cautious. I didn’t know what I could do or say that would inspire a positive change when a young man faced life’s challenges.

One thing I can say for sure: my mentee has a lot of depth now that the layers have been peeled back. He is more than another statistic in the so-called “lost generation”.

What was required of me was simple: just be there. Be empathetic, not judgmental. Be a guide and not authoritarian. Just showing interest and concern has made a world of difference for him. Most importantly, listen without condemning. After all, **don’t we all just want someone to listen and care about who we are?**

Darris Griffin, Mentor

WORLD VISION



Community Service Project

Friends for Youth believes in giving back to our community, so we provide service projects in which our matches can participate, like the one held in February at *World Vision*.

Fourteen *FFY* volunteers helped sort, label and box donated clothes from *Walmart* to be shipped overseas to children in third-world countries.

BRIAN'S WEDDING

Brian and Sebastian will be matched for 3 years this April. They met through our bike building group. Brian had wanted to start off small before making a commitment to a year of mentoring. Before the group was over, they were already matched.

At their year anniversary, we went out for ice cream to celebrate. We re-evaluated their match and they both decided to remain matched for another year. Sebastian said, "we'll be friends for life. He'll probably be in my wedding."

Brian recently got married and had hoped that Sebastian would be able to attend. The wedding was to be formal, so a tux would be required. *Ted's Clothiers* graciously donated a

tux for Sebastian to wear and I had the pleasure of being his date!



The wedding was beautiful and we both felt honored to be a part of Brian's big day.

Sebastian is spunky and loves to make jokes. He told me that he should take a little bit of credit for the marriage. After all, Brian was "afraid of commitment before he met me."

*Jessica Cleveland,
Match Coordinator*



RUNNING AFTER SECOND CHANCES

...

Friends for Youth and friends of *Friends* will be “running after second chances” in the Kaiser Permanente Colfax Marathon to raise funds to provide more youth in the Denver area with *second chances through life-changing mentoring relationships*.

This is our second year running in the Marathon. Last year we raised over \$10,500 through 40 runners. Many thanks to everyone - runners and contributors - for allowing us to reach more youth.

This year, we're hoping to raise \$15,000, so we'll need all of the help we can get!

Please consider helping us by running (or walking) in a *relay*, a *half-marathon*, or a *full marathon*, or support us online: givingfirst.org/FFYmarathon. And if you're in the neighborhood on **May 15th**, stop by and cheer for us - we'll need the encouragement!

Check out our website for more information or contact Jessica at jessicac@friendsforyouth.com.

We need 60 runners!

www.givingfirst.org/FFYmarathon

Help us raise \$15,000!

Friends for Youth is a 501(c)(3) organization. All donations are tax deductible.



Team “Young Guns”



Amy, Tracy, Jess & Sarah



Katy, Ashley & Dave



Carolyn & Sally

LASER TAG



Our annual Laser Tag match event was a huge success, with more than 20 in attendance! Whether the match was brand new or 3 years old, everyone had a blast.

If you have not attended this event before, keep an eye out for the next one – you won't want to miss it!



GROUP MENTORING

We offer group mentoring opportunities to mentor young ladies residing in group homes every quarter.

Current Groups Offered in Group Homes:

JC's Journey Group Home
Tuesdays from 6-8 pm
Lakewood
(Current Topic: Traveling the World)

Commerce City Group Home
Thursdays from 6-7:30 pm
Uncommon Solutions
(Current Topic: Media Technologies)

**Contact Kate
re: groups**
kateh@friendsforyouth.com

We want to appreciate our mentors and volunteers for everything they do for our youth and for our mission.

Please be our guest at our annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner.

Friday, April 29
Embassy Suites Southeast
6 pm - Social Hour & Hors d'oeuvres
6:30 pm - Dinner Seating

...Invitation to follow...

UPCOMING EVENTS	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY
	Apr 16: Game Day	May 15: Colfax Marathon	June 12: Car Show	July 16: Fishing
	Apr 29: Volunteer Appreciation Dinner		June 25: White Water Rafting	

We offer activities every month for our mentors and youth to enjoy. Check 'em out!

CELEBRATING MATCH ANNIVERSARIES



Sierra & Megan
4 years



Dave & Devin
4 years



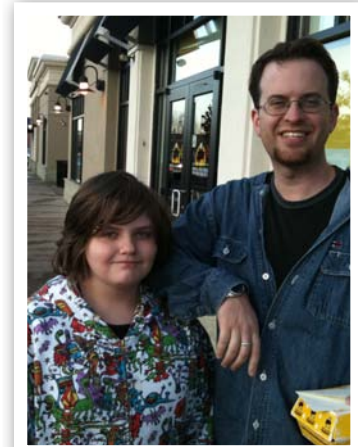
Julie & Ashley
5 years



Meagen & Jess
3 years



Charissa & Daniella
6 years



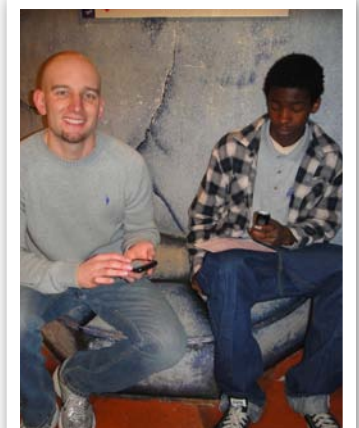
Tyler & Will
3 years



Ebonie & Linda
2 years



Gabby & Rhonda
4 years



Joel & Shareef
4 years

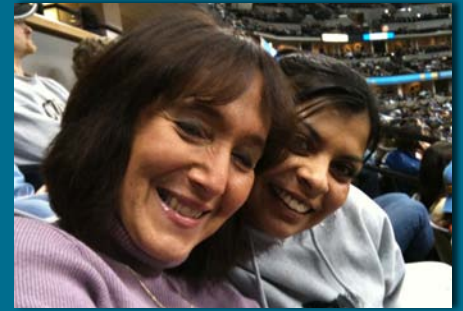


GIRLS NIGHT OUT

NUGGETS GAME

Although the Nuggets lost to the Rockets, we had a great time!

Some of us even got our pictures taken with the mascot, Rocky!!



This was one of our largest turnouts for a GNO, with 28 in attendance!

Thanks, again, *Kroenke Sports*, for the donation of the tickets!

GIDEON'S TRUCK

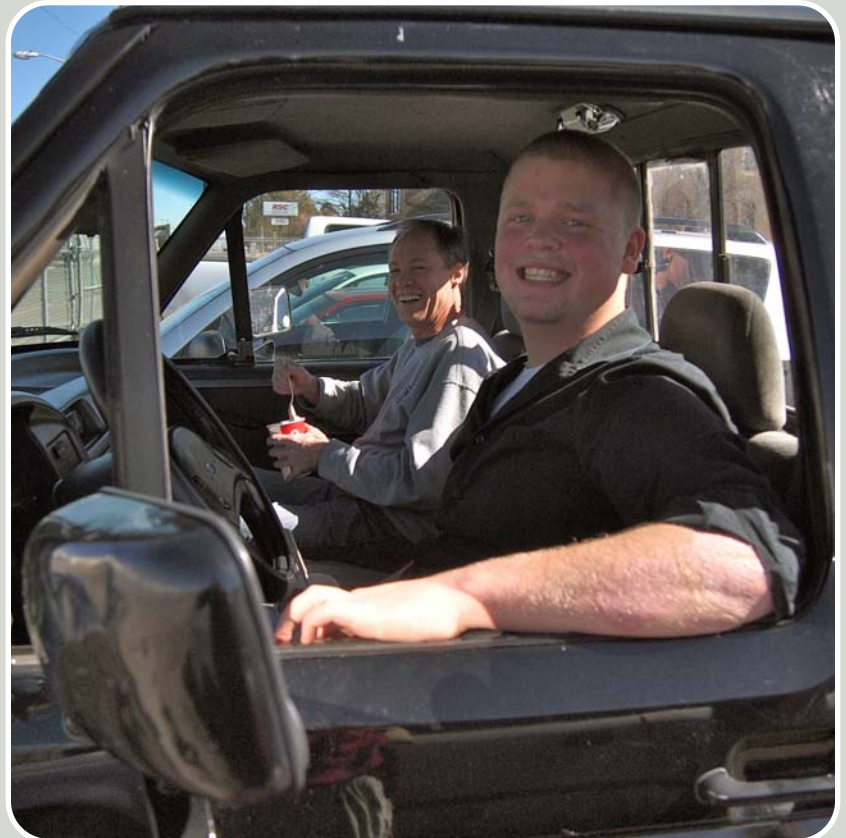
As FFY staff, volunteers and youth were beginning to meet up for the *World Vision* volunteering event, we got an unexpected surprise as one of our youth arrived – driving his very own truck and his mentor to the event!

Gideon, who has been matched with his mentor, JR, for almost 4 years, told us that he had saved up for a long time and finally paid cash for his truck in December. He has been learning more about vehicle maintenance and has done the necessary work himself.

“It’s not perfect,” Gideon says, “it has some scratches and the 4 wheel drive needs some work...” but we all agreed that it just added character.

Gideon is about to become a manager where he has worked for the past couple of years. He was also just named “Employee of the Month” out of 13 restaurants. His hard work has been paying off and we are very proud of him.

Dave Lucitt, Match Coordinator



Want to stay connected?
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On any given day at *Friends for Youth*, these are the images that play through my mind...

- A young run-away calling her mentor to say, "I'm OK, I just want to come home."
- A mentor answering his phone to hear a young voice say, "Hey, Man, I got a job!"
- A young woman **graduating from high school** as the first in her family.
- A young marine off to serve his country after successfully paroling from the Division of Youth Corrections.
- A young lady from the Cortinez Group home stepping on to the campus of Metro State College for her **first day of college**.
- A mentor sitting in the football stands watching the star wide receiver because his dad is in prison.
- A foster parent in tears because one of our church partners just blessed them with Christmas gifts for the entire household.



I love *Friends for Youth* because of its simple mission: offering friendship in the spirit of Christ.

This is a beautiful gift that **impassions the heart, silences doubt, embraces victory, calms fears, and transforms lives.**

To all of you who offer this simple gift to your friend each week, thank you.

To all of you who invest in these lives through your financial support, there is no gift more valuable.

*Tracy Esslinger,
Executive Director*

"There is no greater love than this: to lay down one's life for a friend."

John 15:13



BOARD MEMBERS

Grant Roper - Chair
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 Karl Bruce - Member At-Large
 Jean Greene - Member At-Large



Does your workplace support
Mile High United Way?

Please consider designating your one-time or monthly gift to *Friends for Youth*.

STAFF MEMBERS

Tracy Esslinger - Executive Director
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 Marvel Jones - Administrative Coordinator
 Andrew Yamazaki - Community Relations
 & FTF Event Coordinator
 Lewis Brown - SJ Program Manager
 Michelle Hernandez - SJ Match Coordinator
 Julian Proctor - SJ Match Coordinator
 Christine Yaekle - Program Manager
 David Lucitt - Group & Match Coordinator
 Jessica Cleveland - Match Coordinator



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OUR 6TH ANNUAL
FALLEN TO FREEDOM
MOTORCYCLE RIDE AND
CAR SHOW

Save the Date:
Saturday,
August 20



To benefit
and raise
awareness for
**Friends for
Youth**



Want more information?
Contact Andrew Yamazaki
andrewy@friendsforyouth.com
To register, go to
www.friendsforyouth.com

If you are no longer interested in receiving our newsletter or other *Friends for Youth* mailings,
please contact Marvel Jones at 303.756.9285 ext. 105.