

# Friends for Youth

MERRY CHRISTMAS! THANK YOU FOR YOUR PART IN BRINGING...

## Joy

Serenity shared some of her story at our Vine event in November. She spoke of being placed into foster care at an early age and feeling lost and afraid. Then she spoke of the joy she got from the mentors at her group home: "Friends for Youth has changed my way of thinking about things.... They have made me so happy and now I finally have consistent people in my life."



Listening to Serenity's story at the Brown Palace Tea

## Hope

Gabby was just one of two of our ladies to graduate from high school this year. Her mentor, Rhonda, threw her a fabulous graduation party to celebrate her accomplishment and plans to do so for our future lady graduates. Gabby had nearly dropped out of school two years ago and is the first in her family to graduate. We have such high hopes for her future!



Celebrating her graduation from High School

## Love

Krystal and Lauren celebrated their year anniversary along with six other matches who went through the *Success Journey* program alongside each other. It was heart-warming to watch these young ladies gather together with their mentors to create memorable jewelry pieces as they celebrated their first year of friendship!



Enjoying their one year match anniversary



## Tea at the Palace

Over 100 women and young ladies attended the Vine's formal tea at the *Brown Palace*. Both youth and mentors told of some of their touching experiences with *Friends for Youth*.

*"Friends for Youth helped me to realize that I am important and that I have a voice. I am so grateful that they have come into my life."* - Serenity

The Vine is an informal women's group created to support girls' services within *Friends for Youth*.

# Photos from this Year



## Celebrating Our Many Blessings in 2010

\* 98 youth matched one-to-one

\* 46 youth mentored in Site-Based

\* 59 youth served in Group Mentoring

\* 66 youth served in Success Journey

\* Two new Staff hired

**\* 245 TOTAL YOUTH SERVED \***

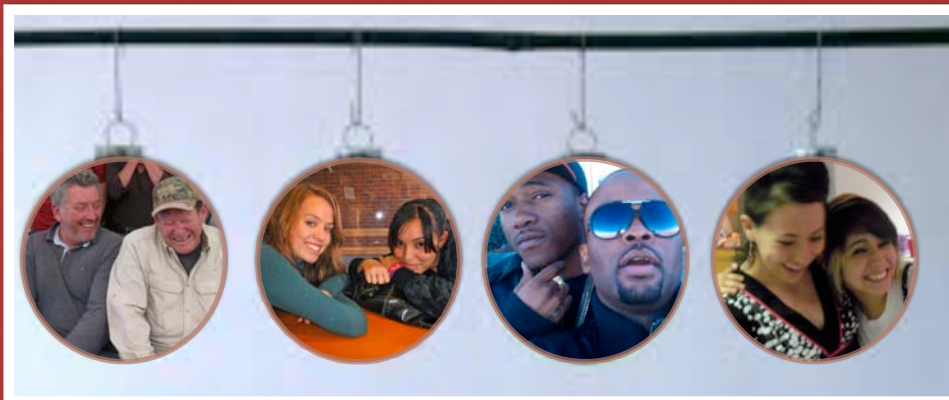
\* Three new Board Members

\* 5-yr strategic plan developed

\* \$10,120 raised in the Colfax Marathon

\* \$37,500 raised in the Fallen to Freedom Ride

\* \$46,680 raised on Giving First Day



*For these and so many more, we are thankful!*

# Reflections from Tracy Esslinger

One of my most memorable experiences in 2010 was driving Tony home from bike group. I was substituting for Dave Lucitt, who runs our Group Mentoring program. Tony had been referred to *Friends for Youth* by one of our mentors who knew that Tony lived with his grandparents and that his grandmother was recently diagnosed with cancer. Tony has a dad, but his dad spends most of his time out of the country, rarely seeing him. His half brother and sister also live with Tony, and their dad comes by on weekends to spend time with them, leaving Tony at home with no real male role model.

On that particular drive home, Tony and I talked about a lot of things: his love for bike group, his love of sports, and his longing to have someone pick him up and take him places and to pay attention to just him.

**"CAN YOU PLEASE FIND ME A MENTOR?" HE ASKED.**

"Dave said it might take a while because you don't have enough men,"

he continued, "but I really want a mentor!" My heart sank knowing that our waiting list for boys is one to two years! I didn't have the heart to tell him that, so I opted with the hopeful, "We'll do everything we can to make that happen".

For days, weeks, and months, Tony was on my mind. Finally, on Sep 30th of this year, we matched Tony with the perfect mentor, Chuck. He has his male role model!

My heart is burdened knowing that thousands of young people want and need mentors. Two years ago we devoted a half time staff position to recruit mentors; another half time position was added this year to recruit men for the Success Journey program. These positions are desperately needed in order to ensure the 250 volunteers we need annually. We need your help: support our recruitment efforts and help us spread the word that we are in need of mentors.

Thanks for your support and Merry Christmas!!!

## MATCHES



AVALANCHE GAME



BRONCOS GAME



PAINTBALL



LASER TAG

TONY





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*World Vision* works in communities worldwide, tackling the causes of poverty and injustice.



## VOLUNTEERING AT WORLD VISION

*World Vision* gave us the opportunity to pack over 4,500 pairs of shoes for young people in Africa, some of which are unable to leave their homes without shoes due to the poor conditions of the roads.

We spent a mere four hours helping, but we were changed for life. Many of the youth said it was so special for them to help other people and they wanted to go back again soon.