HOMELESS STUDENT STABILITY PROGRAM
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | FEBRUARY 2025

HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS
by Liam McEvilly

"My favorite part of the program was that Mike would always call us and check in on our progress."

A counsellor at MAP High School in Spokane (a specialized school for grades 9 -12 where all students are dealing with mental illness) referred a Single Mother and her 16 year old daughter to Youth Reengagement Specialist, Mike at Open Doors for help with their housing situation. They were temporarily staying with a former partner of Mom's, in a far from ideal situation but at least they had a roof over their heads.

Before that they had been living "Doubled Up" with a family member and once the apartment complex found out they needed to leave quickly so that the family member's lease wasn't terminated.

Mike helped them begin looking for housing, but it quickly became evident that a 10-year-old eviction during a divorce would be a big barrier to finding a place. They were met with zero sympathy and comments like "Don't even apply" from a couple of apartment complexes. Obviously, this was a very discouraging process. Mike kept morale up and offered to speak to a private landlord on the family's behalf. After explaining their circumstances and with much negotiation, Mike used HSSP dollars to pay their move in costs of $4200 for their first and last month's rent and housing deposit. They were approved and moved into their own home on 20th December, just in time for Christmas. But Mike's help did not stop there - he also provided them with over $200 worth of household items to make their new place feel like home and connected them with SNAP Food benefits and an organization called Foundational Community Supports in Spokane for additional, ongoing support. Nicely done, Mike!

UPCOMING EVENTS

- February HSSP Learning Circle - February 25th 11:00am-12:00pm

- Know your Rights - ICE in Schools - February 26th 10am-12pm

- Serving Specific Families Training - March 6th 10am-12pm

- School Housing Network - March 11th 11:00am - 12:00pm

Are you active on LinkedIn? Click here to join the HSSP Resource Sharing Group

HUSKY POST PRISON PATHWAYS

Are you working with someone who has been involved in the criminal justice system and looking to go back to school or is currently enrolled at any College in WA but looking for some extra support? If so, check out the brand new program at University of Washington, Tacoma. It's called Husky Post Prison Pathways and they can help!

They are staffed by people who have been there, and who care deeply about building relationships and exploring posibilities with people of any age.

If you would like to learn more about the program please have a look at their website or you can reach out to Christopher Johnston via email.

RESOURCE: HOME INTERNET ESSENTIALS

If you are working with a family who are claiming some form of Government assistance (like Medicaid or Free/Reduced School Lunches) then tell them about Xfinity's Home Internet Essentials Program. They should be able to get home internet services for as little as $15.95 per month if Xfinity is available in their area.

BUILDING CHANGES IS HIRING!

- **Grants and Institutional Engagement Officer:** We are currently seeking a primary grant writer and grant application manager, who will also work to broaden relationships and engagement of institutional community partners, including foundations and businesses. Our fundraising approach is from a community-centric lens, grounded in racial equity and justice.

- **Senior Research Associate -** This position will focus on producing applied research and evaluation relevant for policy and practice on topics identified through collaboration with partners and Building Changes staff with the goal of improving services, supports, and outcomes for students, youth, and families experiencing homelessness.

We offer excellent health, time off, retirement, and other benefits. Please visit our website for more information and instructions on how to apply!

For questions or story suggestions, please contact liam.mcevilly@buildingchanges.org