



A Newsletter by Catholic Charities Serving Central Washington

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Building Independence: How Catholic Charities Walks With Local Youth

Homeless and couch-hopping with her two toddlers, 23-year-old Isabel turned to Catholic Charities for structural and financial support. Her case manager helped her master the skill of budgeting, which allowed Isabel to leave a grueling midnight shift to spend more time with her children. Now in her eighth month of the program, Isabel works manageable hours, is three months away from earning her GED, and plans to enter massage therapy school. Isabel says the program helped her see the bigger picture and *truly saved her family*.

Isabel's story shows our integrated care in action. For most young people, transitioning into adulthood is a major milestone full of excitement and freedom. But for those exiting the foster care system or facing housing and employment instability, it can feel incredibly daunting and uncertain. At **Catholic Charities Serving Central Washington**, we make

sure *no one has to walk into adulthood alone*. Together, we offer comprehensive support to vulnerable individuals ages 13 to 25, guiding them towards long-term self-sufficiency and confidence.

Our holistic approach addresses the root cause of instability. We combine localized community resources with evidence-based programs like **LifeSet**, which helps young adults successfully exit foster care within nine months. This runs alongside long-term housing vouchers and our **Young Adult Housing Services**.

We also know that true self-sufficiency requires a healthy mind. Recognizing a sharp rise in complex trauma among transitional youth, Catholic Charities has intentionally expanded its behavioral health support. This includes specialized adolescent

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Walking With Youth

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counseling using **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy**. This therapy helped individuals like 16-year-old Gemma, who faced overwhelming feelings of depression, to find hope again after a crisis.

Additionally, our recently launched **New Journeys First Episode Psychosis program** in Chelan and Douglas Counties provides early intervention for youth at the first signs of illness. A collaborative clinical team supports these individuals, helping them successfully return to school, work, and daily life.

These transformations represent the core mission of Youth and Young Adult Services. By addressing immediate physical needs alongside critical behavioral health care, Catholic Charities is helping to break the cycle of generational poverty and homelessness in Central Washington. When young people are equipped with the stability and confidence to thrive, our entire community grows stronger and more resilient. Each youth who succeeds represents a brighter future for the Yakima Valley and beyond. To learn more about these programs or to make a referral, contact us at **(509) 853-1300**.



From Fear to Freedom: Providing Stable Housing

*For young adults experiencing homelessness, survival mode makes prioritizing education, mental health, or employment nearly impossible. Our **Young Adult Housing Program** breaks this cycle for vulnerable young people aged 18 to 24 by providing a 12-month rental assistance model where case managers cover full rent and help navigate landlord relationships. Because our model is low-barrier and youth-led, weekly case management adjusts to their individual lives, helping them master fundamental skills like budgeting, driving, or studying for the GED.*

*The regional impact of this work is vast. In the fiscal year spanning July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026, our housing program **served 153 participants** across Yakima, the Tri-Cities, Walla Walla, Wenatchee, and Spokane, with teams currently supporting 86 young adults. To bridge critical service gaps, we recently welcomed a new Foster Youth to Independence case manager in Spokane, entered our second year of services in Walla Walla, and began enrolling 10 additional participants in*

Yakima County at the new Casa de La Mora site.

*True independence requires addressing more than just four walls. We closely collaborate with our wider network, connecting residents to job training like the **Brew Hope coffee shop internship** and flexible mental health care through our behavioral health therapist, Karen Diaz.*

*The true measure of this program is found in the resilience of the young people who find stability here. One past participant utilized their housing stability to complete their education, earn a scholarship, and now works full-time within the community helping other unhoused youth. Other recent graduates include Julie, a former foster youth who balanced an internship while studying for her GED, and Jasmin, a single mother whose apartment provided the peace of mind necessary to return to school. As our regional footprint grows, you can directly impact these young lives by donating essential household move-in items or by becoming an employment partner by emailing **azogelman@catholiccharitiescw.org**.*

Brew Hope: Rolling Into a Brighter Future

At its core, **Brew Hope** is about far more than just a cup of coffee. Located in East Yakima, this unique shop serves as a vibrant internship site for local youth and young adults experiencing homelessness or transitioning out of the foster care system, giving them a *supportive environment* to build stability and career confidence.

Envisioned by former CEO Darlene Darnell and run in partnership with Casey Family Programs, **Brew Hope** fills a critical gap for our Youth and Young Adult Support services.

Under the guidance of Barista Manager Ahlaya Gonzales-Villafán, interns gain essential technical and professional communication skills alongside wraparound case management such as resume building and mock interviews. The impact is undeniable: one recent graduate who started last January completely flourished, and today she is *thriving in an external role*



where she already trains new hires. Looking ahead, we plan to also bring this program model to the Tri-Cities, aligning a new launch with the opening of our Kennewick office building.

Now, thanks to the enduring commitment of our community and stakeholders, this impactful program is taking its mission on the road. We are thrilled to announce that the brand-new **Brew Hope Mobile coffee truck** has officially been wrapped and finalized! As we secure the final operational approvals over the next couple of months, you will soon see this truck serving up drinks at local community events and our campuses in Yakima.

This mobile expansion drastically increases our capacity to serve vulnerable young adults while introducing a dynamic new mobile

Brew Hope currently has a growing waitlist of youth referred by our Behavioral Health team, Rod's House, Casey Family Programs, and Foster First. You can help us *build their futures* by partnering with us to hire our job-ready graduates, or by investing directly in the mission.

Visit us at **303 E D Street in Yakima** (Mon–Thu: 7:30am–4:30pm, Fri: 7:30am–11:30am) to see our mission in action. Every cup sold *directly fuels the potential* of our region's young people.

Help us make a lasting impact. Serving you and your neighbors for over 75 years.

Donate to support essential resources, from counseling and housing to childcare and senior services. Your gift provides hope to the most vulnerable in our community.

Volunteer across our services—how you help is entirely up to you! We match your unique skills and interests to ensure the best fit for both you and our clients.

Join the Catholic Charities team! Our most valuable resource is our people, and you might be the perfect match for one of our open positions.

Pray for our mission, our staff, and the individuals we serve every day.





We envision communities where people are treated with dignity and respect, their basic needs are met, and they are empowered to enhance the quality of their own lives.

Catholic Charities is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization funded in part by the State of Washington, federal contracts, and grants. Our mission is furthered by the contributions of generous foundations and individual donors.

We serve all in the community, regardless of faith.

Find hope at a
Catholic Charities office
near you.



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LifeSet: Building a Safety Net for Youth

Turning 18 can mean losing systemic support overnight for young adults aging out of foster care or juvenile rehabilitation. To bridge this gap, Catholic Charities utilizes **LifeSet**, an intensive, youth-led program that *walks alongside individuals* aged 17.5 to 23. Case managers maintain small caseloads to deliver dedicated, one-on-one support, helping participants master real-world skills like budgeting, lease comprehension, and building healthy relationships, all backed by a licensed clinician and a 24/7 crisis line.

This model transformed the life of Megan, a young mother facing anxiety and the pressures of parenting. Working with her **LifeSet specialist**, Megan successfully navigated financial aid to enter community college, established a plan to support her ongoing sobriety, and childproofed her apartment for her four-year-old daughter.

Operating across Yakima, the Tri-Cities, and Spokane, **LifeSet** connects youth to internal housing and behavioral health teams to overcome systemic shortages in affordable housing. Ultimately, success is measured by the *confidence, stability, and community networks* these young adults build to carry them long after graduation.