



Youth Services System Inc.

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The Wheeling SleepOut Returns to Raise Funds for Runaway and Homeless Youth

WHEELING, W.Va — The Youth Services System, Inc. (YSS) Wheeling SleepOut fundraiser returns for its twelfth year on Friday, November 4th, 2022 at the Miracle League Field, part of the JB Chambers I-470 Complex located at 567 Community St. in Wheeling.

The SleepOut is the signature fundraiser for the YSS Transitional Living Program, which provides housing, life skills, employment assistance and more to youth ages 17-21 who are experiencing homelessness, have aged out of the system of care, or otherwise find themselves without shelter and support. The event coincides with National Runaway Prevention Month – a nation-wide effort to raise awareness about youth homelessness.

“The Wheeling SleepOut has given us the opportunity to support so many youth in our community in multiple ways through our Transitional Living Program,” said Pam Jeffers, YSS Transitional Living Program Manager.

Once participants register online they are free to start a peer-to-peer virtual fundraiser, with a special travel voucher prize going to the top-earning individual. On the evening of the event, participants are encouraged to enter the popular Boxed-In Design Contest, in which teams build temporary cardboard structures on the Miracle League Field and attempt to brave the elements for the night — experiencing only a fraction of what a young person facing homelessness must endure. This year’s theme is “Once Upon a Time...”, as the funds raised will help youth and young adults take the next step towards living “happily ever after”.

“Each year, approximately 4.2 million young people experience some form of homelessness. This is a statistic that we strive to change,” said Staci Stephen, YSS Director of Development. “November is National Runaway Prevention Month, which provides the perfect opportunity to shine light on a subject that too often remains in the dark – youth facing homelessness.”

“This year’s theme, ‘Once Upon a Time...’ reminds us that not all kids get to hear bedtime stories, and not all kids receive a fairytale ending,” said Stephen. “Save your cardboard and construct your favorite fairytale-themed structure to help us raise awareness and funds for youth facing homelessness. Spending the night in a cardboard box for one night gives us only a small glimpse into what these young people experience on a daily basis. We hope you will join us on the evening of November 4th for a great cause.”

Local celebrity guest judges Bob Heldreth (Captain of the Wheeling Fire Department), Alex Panas (Wheeling Heritage), Brian Riesbeck (Riesbeck's Food Market), and Ric Zambito (Zambito Flooring America and Fore Seasons Golf) will award honors for "Best in Show", "Top Educational", and "Most Creative". Snacks, coffee and hot chocolate will be served throughout the evening, with a light breakfast available the following morning before participants take down their temporary shelters. Various door prizes will be awarded throughout the event, and there will be music and a photo booth provided by Nick Arno Entertainment.

YSS would like to thank Northwood Health Systems for being a "Princess"-level Sponsor, and MPR Transloading for being the Photo Booth Sponsor for this year's event. Sponsorships are still available.

To register, or for more information about sponsorships and volunteer opportunities, please visit www.youthservicessystem.org or contact Director of Development Staci Stephen at sstephen@ysswv.com | 740-310-8333

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About Youth Services System, Inc.:

Youth Services System, Inc.'s mission is "to create better futures for children, families and our community." YSS is committed to responding to the complex needs of youth at serious risk. Since 1974, Youth Services System, Inc. has reached thousands of youth and their families with our shelter, residential, community-based and professional services. Together with youth and their families, we work to improve their physical and emotional well-being, to address the debilitating effects of abuse, substance use, and trauma, and to build the skills and connections they need to be successful. Accredited by CARF International, YSS is supported by our volunteer Board of Directors, dedicated staff and faithful community, allowing us to make a measurable impact in the lives of youth. For more information, visit www.youthservicessystem.org.