



YOUTHLINK: OUR COMPREHENSIVE CAMPAIGN

IGNITE CHANGE

IN THE LIVES OF YOUTH 2016-2018



YOUTHLINK

We believe the 2,000 young people who walk through our doors have a light burning within them waiting to be fanned into flames of purpose and passion for the future.

Every year in collaboration with our partners at the Youth Opportunity Center (YOC), we engage with youth experiencing homelessness to help them fuel their personal potential and reconnect with the community in healthy ways.



We meet young people where they are, build trusting relationships, provide acceptance and opportunities for growth, and strive to keep them moving forward on their journeys toward stability.

We believe homelessness is not—and CANNOT—be a destination for the young people we partner with. It is simply one stop on their journeys forward in life.

The next step in creating pathways forward for young people experiencing homelessness is our Comprehensive Campaign **Ignite**

Change in the Lives of Youth. This includes creation of 46 units of supportive housing—which our development partner, Project for Pride in Living (PPL), is building onsite—for youth (18–24) experiencing homelessness, and this also includes our investment in YouthLink’s current facility and programs.

With your help, we have the opportunity to rekindle the light needed to propel young people onto pathways of self-reliance and illuminate a future where dreams and goals become reality. Thank you for considering a partnership with us.

With great appreciation and warmth,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Heather H. Huseby".

Dr. Heather Huseby
Executive Director

MISSION

To support and empower young people on their journey to self-reliance.

VISION

A community in which all youth, without regard to their living situation, have an equal opportunity to pursue their goals and dreams, and an equal likelihood of achieving them.

OUR APPROACH TO PARTNERING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE:

We **see positive qualities** in the young people who walk through our doors.

We **meet youth where they are** and provide an open, safe community.

We **recognize that homelessness isn’t permanent** for youth.

We **tend to the whole** person.

We **understand that youth have had traumatic experiences** that may have resulted in their homelessness.

We work with youth to **make their current situations as safe as possible.**

We **build relationships** based on trust and mutual respect.

We know this isn’t an issue we can conquer on our own, so we **embrace collaboration** and community building.

We **provide opportunities** for growth.

Our approach is based on the nine evidence-based principles for working with youth. These nine principles emerged from a collaboration between the Otto Bremer Foundation, evaluation expert Dr. Michael Quinn Patton, five other youth-serving organizations, and Dr. Nora F. Murphy of Terraluna Collaborative.





THE SPARK

Since beginning as a unit of the Hennepin County Area Youth Diversion Program in 1974, YouthLink has been a safe refuge for young people experiencing homelessness in the Twin Cities. While our services and how they are delivered has continued to transform, YouthLink has always offered—and will continue to create—a warm, safe, supportive community that illuminates new pathways for young people facing barriers, and helps them build sustainable and stable futures.

In the 1990s and 2000s, YouthLink expanded to provide support services to 143 units of housing for youth experiencing homelessness—taking a leadership role in growing the number of units available to young people in the Twin Cities.

In 2010, YouthLink became the host site for the Youth Opportunity Center (YOC), a unique collaborative service model, which provides an array of evidence-based, outcome-driven programs and activities to help light the way for youth to enter pathways of self-reliance. The YOC brings together multiple nonprofits, services, and resources in one place, providing a “one-stop shop” for homeless youth. At present, more than 30 partnering agencies combine to provide a comprehensive array of support services at the YOC to nearly 2,000 youth annually.

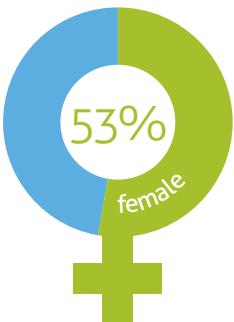
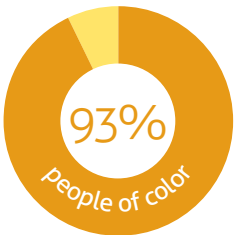
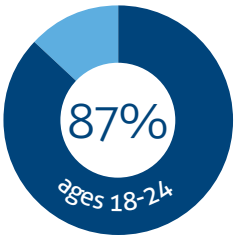


SHINING LIGHT ON THE NEED

WHO WE SERVE

2015 outcomes

2,007 young people
accessing services through
YouthLink and the YOC



There are over 4,000 young people who experience homelessness on any given night in Minnesota—the majority of whom are living in the Twin Cities. We believe these young people are not a burden, but an investment opportunity. Young people, ages 18-24, who are disconnected from education and employment—and who are also experiencing homelessness—are at a unique crossroads in their lives. Research shows that young people who remain disconnected from society after age 24 are significantly less likely to lead a fully independent life.

According to the 2016 economic report “The Economic Burden of Youth Experiencing Homelessness: An Estimate of the Short- and Long-Term Costs to Taxpayers and Society in Hennepin County, Minnesota” the average 20-year-old who visited YouthLink in 2011 will impose an excess taxpayer burden of over \$248,000 and an excess social burden of \$613,000 over the course of her life if she remains disconnected from education and

employment pathways. When these figures are applied to all of the youth who visited YouthLink in 2011, the lifetime excess costs would be more than \$360 million to taxpayers and an excess lifetime social burden of more than \$889 million.

While our state has made enormous strides in solving homelessness, there is more to be done. According to the most recent Wilder count, children and youth under the age of 24 are the most likely to be homeless. Overwhelmingly, young people experiencing homelessness are people of color. Our **Ignite Change in the Lives of Youth** campaign focuses on these youth and reconnecting them to education, employment, and supportive housing, which will effectively move them to self-sufficiency and independence.

With your help, we can ensure that all youth have an equal opportunity to pursue and achieve their goals and dreams, and that our community thrives.

62.1

million dollars in savings to the taxpayers if 1 in 5 YouthLink clients became self-sufficient productive adults. *(The Economic Burden of Youth Experiencing Homelessness: An Estimate of the Short- and Long-Term Costs to Taxpayers and Society in Hennepin County, Minnesota, 2016)*

65

the percentage of all jobs, by 2020, that will require some kind of postsecondary education and training. *(Recovery: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements Through 2020, Georgetown Public Policy Institute, 2013)*

73

the percentage of youth surveyed who are very confident or hopeful that they will achieve their goals. *(Opportunity Road, 2012)*

85

the percentage of young people housed through YouthLink’s housing programs who made progress towards and/or achieved an educational goal. *(2015)*

90

the percentage of residents leaving YouthLink’s housing programs who moved to their own safe and affordable housing. *(2015)*



LIGHTING THE FUSE

YOUTHLINK PROGRAMS & SERVICES

The services offered by YouthLink and the Youth Opportunity Center help young people reconnect and transform their lives through four core intervention areas that fuel their journey to independence.



DROP-IN CENTER AND BASIC NEEDS:

The first point of contact for youth, which includes street outreach, basic needs support, assistance with bus tokens for transportation, personalized case management, and access to employment, education, and other social supports.



EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT:

Onsite partners ignite change through “earning and learning” support—combining education and real-life career opportunities.



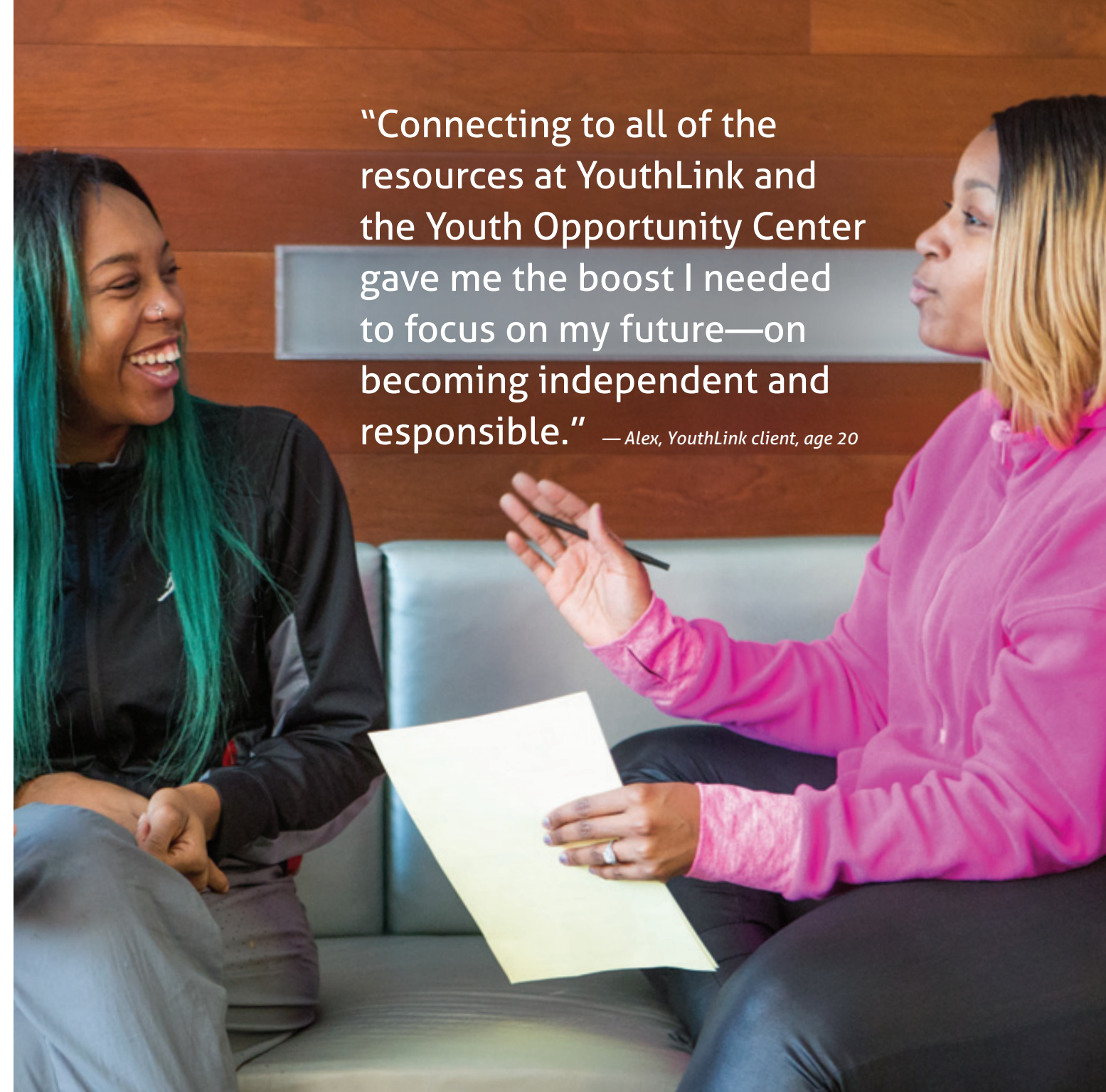
YOUTH HOUSING:

Case management is provided for young people living in 143 units of non-time-limited housing. We are proud to say that 80% of youth in housing exit with an increased income level, and 85% make progress toward/or achieve an educational goal.



HEALTH AND WELLNESS:

Access to physical and mental health services through the onsite health clinic, as well as mental health supports, HIV/AIDS services, and personalized services for LGBTQ youth.



“Connecting to all of the resources at YouthLink and the Youth Opportunity Center gave me the boost I needed to focus on my future—on becoming independent and responsible.” — Alex, YouthLink client, age 20

IGNITING CHANGE

To create more opportunities for youth to move forward, YouthLink is working with Project for Pride in Living (PPL) to develop 46 housing units for young people experiencing homelessness, ages 18-24. The five-story structure will be connected to YouthLink's headquarters—and the YOC—in downtown Minneapolis.

This development fills a critical need of housing for youth experiencing homelessness, and connects them to the essential skills and pathways needed to succeed in the 21st century economy. However, YouthLink's **Ignite Change** Campaign is about more than just bricks and mortar. It's about creating a holistic, positive, vibrant community that draws upon our nine principles and makes it possible for youth to engage with new opportunities, broaden their horizons, and build self-esteem.

It's about inclusiveness, innovation, and connectivity—to the YOC partner services, transformative programming in education and employment, and connection to the broader community through mentorship and job placement.

With new investments, we can build more than just a building. We can build a community where all young people are equipped with the skills needed to succeed and have an equal opportunity to pursue and achieve their aspirations, goals, and dreams.

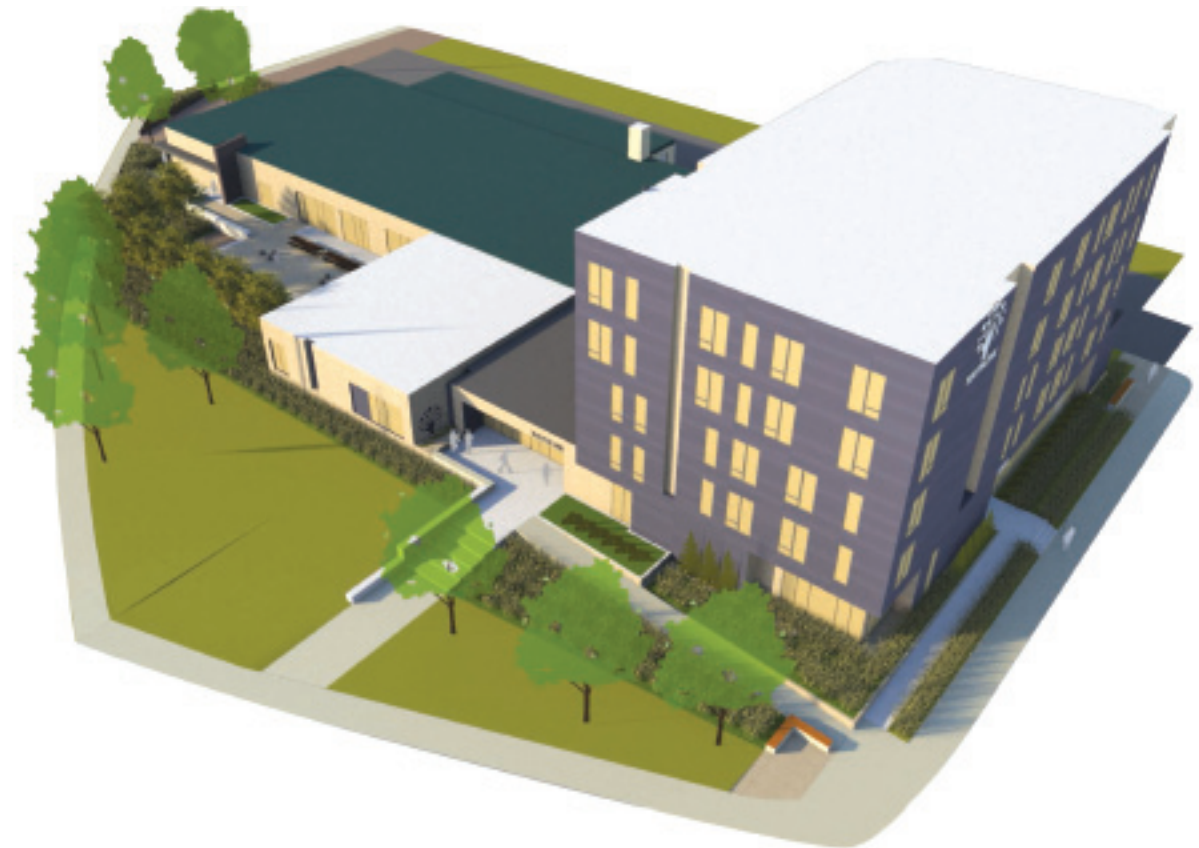
WHERE THERE IS CHANGE, THERE IS OPPORTUNITY. UPDATES TO OUR PHYSICAL SPACE WILL INCLUDE:

- **Housing:** 40 shared units located in ten quad-style apartments, as well as six single-occupancy units for young people whose needs include a more private setting. The housing space will include a resident fitness area, as well as access to mental health supports and recreational programming—critical pieces to help young people address their social, emotional, and physical health. All of this—including access to YOC services and a variety of flexible meeting and conference spaces—builds a sense of community, connection, and well-being.
- **Education and Employment:** Creation of a Career Pathways Center (CPC) for youth to access programs and services to help them establish a foundation from which they can launch into activities leading to self-reliance, including attaining living-wage

employment and earning post-secondary credentials. The CPC will support extraordinary partnerships and collaborations with post-secondary institutions, certificate programs, work-force development training programs, and businesses.

- **Expansion and Redesign:** Expanded and redesigned YouthLink space will support our ability to serve more young people and engage additional partners at the YOC. By connecting the new housing facility to the existing YouthLink headquarters and

Youth Opportunity Center, we will create physical space that clearly reflects our nine principles and focuses on creating opportunities for collaboration and growth of the transformative services critical to the journey-oriented nature of young people experiencing homelessness.



CAMPAIGN PRIORITIES

\$3.5 million

Pathways: Building Community

Investments in capital will unify our existing facility around nine evidence-based principles of good practice for working with youth experiencing homelessness—creating a community of youth engagement, collaboration, and transformative services designed to propel youth forward to brighter futures. Renovations will provide physical openness between levels, and create a balance between public, semi-public, and private spaces to accommodate program needs as they evolve. Renovations will include a commercial kitchen remodel, expansion of the Welcome Center, and increased flexible YouthLink office and Youth Opportunity Center partner space to provide services on-site, as well as provide for emerging technologies to create a more unified and collaborative use of existing space, which will be integrated with the 46-bed housing facility.

\$1 million

Opportunity: Achieving Goals & Dreams

Investments in opportunity open doors that help young people reach their potential by removing barriers keeping them from their goals, dreams, and aspirations. Investments will provide the resources needed to be nimble and responsive to emerging opportunities that help young people move toward self-sufficiency. Gifts may also be designated to specific program funds to help launch young people forward in areas of stable housing, enrollment in post-secondary education, meeting career-focused goals, and building their capacity to continue on their journey forward in life.

\$500,000

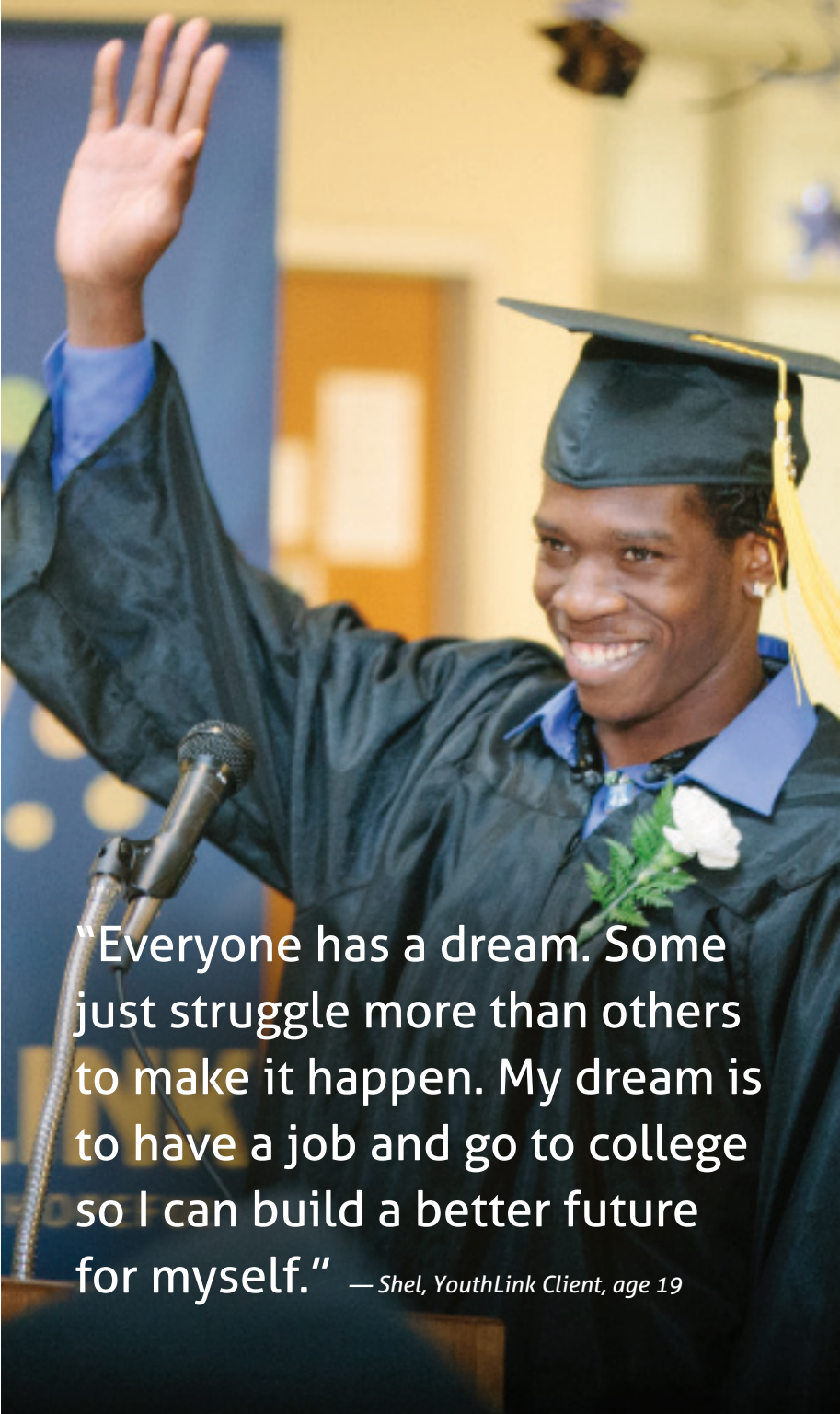
Empowerment: Investing in Employment & Education

Investments in a holistic model of transformative support through the new Career Pathways Center (CPC) will launch young people into GED completion, post-secondary transition, and “earning and learning” pathways focused on living-wage jobs linked with meaningful educational certifications that build personal empowerment. Investments will also support YouthLink’s Community Connectors program, strengthening education and employment connections through one-on-one relationships between young people and adults in the community who can help further their entrepreneurial development, self-sufficiency, and self-reliance.

\$500,000

Navigation: Transforming the Journey Forward

Investments in staff “navigators” and life-changing, transformative support services will help youth navigate, transition, and connect quickly with long-term opportunities for self-sufficiency and economic stability. Working one-on-one with young people, navigators will help young people understand housing, education, and employment systems, gain the skills and resources needed to overcome barriers, and take steps to make real their dreams of a healthy adulthood. Navigators also act as liaisons between young people and community stakeholders—employers, educational institutions, and landlords—furthering opportunity for investments in the prosperity of our community.



“Everyone has a dream. Some just struggle more than others to make it happen. My dream is to have a job and go to college so I can build a better future for myself.” — Shel, YouthLink Client, age 19

WAYS TO INVEST



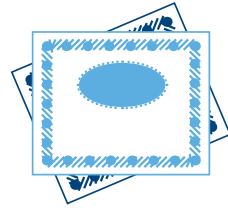
CASH, CHECK, & CREDIT CARD

Donations made by cash, check, or credit card are the easiest way to give. Your gift can be made all at once, or pledges may be paid over a period of one to three years.



IN HONOR & IN MEMORY

A gift to the **Ignite Change** Campaign can honor and remember a loved one, a YouthLink alumnus/a, or a group. Naming opportunities are available.



STOCKS & SECURITIES

Publicly traded stocks, private equity, closely held, S-Corp and other non-publicly traded securities may be appropriate gifts to the **Ignite Change** Campaign.

Please consult your tax advisor for information about the tax benefits of donating stocks and securities.



LEGACY BEQUESTS

Bequests given by making YouthLink a beneficiary in your will, life insurance, IRA, or retirement plan are a wonderful way to give.



REAL ESTATE

Gifts of real estate may avoid capital gains tax.

Please consult your tax advisor.



"Sometimes I think YouthLink is too good to be true...but now I can see my future and I'm on my way. I'm becoming another man."

— Johnnie, YouthLink client, age 22



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If you prefer to receive email correspondence or to be removed from our mailing list, please contact 612.252.1280 or youthlink@youthlinkmn.org.