

Wings OF HOPE

A chance for a better life.

July 2014 Newsletter

High Hopes Gala

Sept.
27

Join us for a fun evening at the Wings of Hope Foundation's High Hopes Gala on Saturday, September 27, 2014, at the Marriott Lake Mary.

Enjoy gourmet food, fellowship, dancing, an open bar and exciting auction items as you help at-risk youth who need your hand to have a chance at a better life. You'll hear firsthand stories from those who have benefited from your support.

We sold out again last year and set a record for funds given to help at-risk youth—more than \$170,000, up more than 7% from the year before. With your help, we can raise the bar again at this year's 19th annual dinner and auction.

Keep an eye out for your Wings of Hope Gala invitation in August!



Kathy and Tony Gautsch with WingsNet program participants at the 2013 Wings of Hope Gala.

Anne's Story

Anne, a 21-year-old in Osceola County's Independent Living Program and mother to a 1-year-old son, struggled to adjust to life in the foster care system after being removed from her mother's care because of neglect and abuse. When she "aged out" of foster care at age 18, she made some bad choices before realizing that she needed to take charge of her life.

Because she enjoys helping and taking care of others, Anne enrolled in Valencia College's nursing A.S. to B.S. articulated degree program. Although she was eager to volunteer in her field to get more experience and better job prospects upon graduation, she couldn't commit to a position because of the bus system's limited schedule and multiple transfers.

Anne's independent living counselors commended her for her focus and motivation to earn her nursing degree and provide a better life for her son. To help her achieve her goals, Wings of Hope provided her a Vespa along with well wishes for a successful future.



WingsNet: Making a Difference

Much of the money raised at the High Hopes Gala will support at-risk youth like Anne (see *Anne's Story*, above). Many young adults who age out of the system have lived in multiple foster homes and changed schools often, and as a result, have fallen behind. They often find it difficult to continue their education and support themselves financially, and because most don't have cars, getting from school to work is challenging. When a crisis occurs, it's common for them to drop out of school to work more hours.

The reality for this vulnerable group is shocking:

- 66% don't have a high school diploma or GED
- 60% will have a baby within four years
- 50% can't find a job
- 33% will become homeless within the first three years



WingsNet: Making a Difference continues on next page —

Immediate Needs

The administrators of area residential and transitional programs have reached out to Wings of Hope for help to cover several pressing needs, including:

- Solid interior doors for 15 efficiency apartments at a transitional facility (\$200 each).
- The replacement of two air-conditioning units at transitional homes (\$4,000 each).
- 20 twin mattress and box-spring sets for residential homes (\$300 each).
- A heavy-duty washer and dryer at residential home (\$1,200).
- Repair and replacement of closet doors at residential home (\$800 with labor).

WingsNet participants also have ongoing needs for help with books, educational fees, computers, tools, uniforms and basic necessities, such as medical needs, food, shelter and transportation.

If you or someone you know can help to fund these needs, please contact Kathy Gautsch: (407) 312-0884, kathy@wingsofhope.net. Donations also can be made by clicking the "How to Help" tab at www.WingsOfHope.net.

WingsNet: Making a Difference, continued —

WingsNet is a financial support and counseling program structured to encourage young adults to become self-sufficient by improving their education, establishing good work habits and learning independent-living skills. By providing incentives for achievement in academics and at work, WingsNet helps keep them on a path to security and success.

- 70% of WingsNet participants — compared to a 40% national average — maintain employment for at least six months
- 25% of WingsNet participants — compared to 3% of youths leaving foster care statewide — are enrolled in vocational or college studies
- WingsNet participants who open and maintain a savings account have increased 25%
- WingsNet participants who drop out of school or delay enrolling as a result of financial emergencies have dropped 25%

Your support is changing lives.



Heart to Heart Heroes

A resident of The Villages, a transitional facility for youths who have "aged out" of the system, washes dishes in a newly renovated kitchen. After hearing about the needs of at-risk youth at last year's Heart-to-Heart Gala, Wings of Hope supporters Gary Bridges and Dave Lundberg volunteered their time, talents and financial assistance — and recruited peers to help them — to update the kitchens in both of the facility's homes.



AmazonSmile

Through AmazonSmile, you can support the Wings of Hope Foundation every time you shop at Amazon.com — at no cost to you. To sign up, visit smile.amazon.com, select "Brian Christopher Lanier Wings of Home Foundation Inc." as the charitable organization you would like to support, then remember to shop at smile.amazon.com. The AmazonSmile site offers the same prices, selection and convenience of Amazon.com, with the bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the price of your purchase to your chosen charity.

Wings of Hope Foundation

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Wings of Hope, a 501(c)3 Public Charity, gives 100% of all funds raised directly to help the youth. Special donations cover our operating expenses, and officers and board members are not compensated.

To date, your donations have enabled Wings of Hope to give more than \$1.3 MILLION to help youth in need.