



Dear Friend of ROOTS,

Every night at ROOTS, courage fills our space. It looks like a young person choosing to trust again and sounds like staff whispering over the phone to find a longer-term safe place for someone who has already been through too much. It lives in every person who walks through our doors, hoping that this time, things might finally change.

This year, our Director of Shelter and Programs, Riley, and one of our Case Managers, Nina, worked for weeks to help a guest who had survived both trafficking and domestic violence. For her safety, we cannot share her name, but we can tell you what it took to help her find stable, secure housing. More than 20 emergency phone calls to providers inside and outside of King County. Countless rejections. And then one yes.

Riley and Nina found her a 90-day program for survivors with her own bedroom, bathroom, and a space where she could bring her cat. It was safe and far enough away that she could finally rest without fear. That one yes meant her life was her own again.

This is what ROOTS does best. We connect, we persist, and we never give up on someone who is fighting to rebuild their life.

We see that same strength in another young guest who has been working closely with our Case Manager, Tristan. At just 21 years old, this guest experienced homelessness for nearly six months after coming to Seattle from out of state. They built a relationship of trust with Tristan, one that allows for deep honesty and reflection. During one of their meetings, they asked, *“How do you navigate life as a queer person knowing so many in this world might hate you?”*

That question stopped us in our tracks. It was not only a moment of vulnerability, but also proof of the trust and care that ROOTS creates every day. Because before someone can begin to plan for housing or stability, they have to feel safe enough to be fully themselves. Tristan recently helped this guest receive a housing referral, which means a location for transitional housing has been found. They now have the opportunity to move into a place of their own and begin the next chapter of their life.

Across the United States, an estimated 4.2 million young adults experience homelessness each year. Some are fleeing unsafe homes or strained family relationships. Others have lost jobs, aged out of foster care, or been priced out of stable housing. For many, the rising cost of rent and lack of affordable housing make independence feel impossible.

Here in Washington State, young adults continue to face one of the highest risks of homelessness in the country. More than 1,300 young people in King County are currently without stable housing, and nearly half are unsheltered on any given night. Behind each number is a young person trying to survive while balancing work, education, or recovery, often without the support most of us take for granted.

Each night at ROOTS, we welcome up to 45 guests into shelter. When we reach capacity, which happens often, our team works directly with guests to find alternative spaces for the night so no one is left without an option. The young people who stay with us are students, workers, and dreamers rebuilding their lives after trauma, displacement, or the loss of stable housing. Some are navigating complex medical needs or pregnancies while trying to find safety. Others are simply trying to catch their breath long enough to plan their next step.



Our case managers meet each guest exactly where they are. They help with everything from securing medical care and navigating legal advocacy to completing job applications and finding housing. These quiet victories may seem small, but together they are the difference between surviving and thriving. Every meal shared, every bed offered, and every hour of case management moves a young person closer to long-term stability.

This year, we anticipate serving nearly 540 unique guests, each taking steps toward stable housing. Every success they achieve is a victory born from long nights, trust built over time, and a community that never gives up.

Yet we know there are many more young people needing and deserving of our support. For some, it might be help with a security deposit on an apartment of their own. For others, it might be covering just the first month of rent so they can save at their new job. It could be keeping a phone paid for and connected so they can stay in touch with employers and case managers. Each young person's needs are different, but all deserve the same chance to build a future that is safe, stable, and their own.

At ROOTS, those we welcome each night come from many paths. Some are escaping domestic or relationship violence. Others are navigating a job loss, conflict at home, or a sudden housing crisis. As the weather grows colder, our shelter fills to capacity each night. Each bed holds a story, and every warm meal and safe night's sleep brings a young person closer to stability. This is the work we are determined to expand in the year ahead, one young person and one small victory at a time.

Your gift can make that difference.

A gift of \$500 can cover a housing deposit for a young person who is working hard and ready to move into a place of their own.

A gift of \$2,000 can fund six months of case management, guiding a guest from shelter to independence.

A gift of any amount tells a young person, "You are not alone. We believe in your future."

When you give to ROOTS, your donation goes directly toward the young people we serve. Your generosity keeps the promise of ROOTS alive. It means that when a young person reaches out for help, someone is there to answer, to listen, and to guide them forward. Please make your gift today so we can continue to be that steady source of safety and hope.



With gratitude,
Erin Chapman Smith
Executive Director, ROOTS



We also invite you to save the date and join us in person on Wednesday, January 28, 2026, for a historic celebration at ROOTS as we break ground on our long-awaited capital campaign building remodel. Together, we will take the next step toward a future where every young person has a safe place to belong.

SAVE THE DATE!



To support ROOTS with an end of year gift, please scan the QR code, visit rootsinfo.org, or mail your check to 4541 19th Ave, Seattle, WA 98105



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