

July 15, 2019

Dear Co-Workers,

Many of us are joining together to form a union. Like you, we believe in the work we do and in the mission, vision, and the future of YouthCare. We know that having a union will be good for us and for our agency. We also want to make sure everyone has a chance to learn more about it.

We believe a union would give us a greater say in decisions that impact our work and allow us to make improvements such as:

- Cultivating equity and transparency around compensation and benefits with wages that reflect the level of responsibility
- Prioritizing consistent training specific to our jobs
- Advocating for safe staffing levels and reducing turnover's negative impact on youth
- Implementing meaningful changes to move towards racial equity
- Improving access to vacation time we've earned
- Creating a standardized, transparent and fair discipline process
- Building a culture where we can better advocate for ourselves, each other and the youth

Why do we believe this is possible? Staff at other non-profit organizations, such as [Northwest Justice Project](#), [Plymouth Housing](#) and [Compass Housing Alliance](#) have recently organized with OPEIU Local 8 and made significant improvements in their first contracts. And over time other unionized non-profits like [Solid Ground](#) have been able to continue to lift the standards and create a culture where frontline staff have a powerful voice at their organizations.

Forming a union means we'll have a legally protected process and a united voice when we approach management to make positive changes. We're not doing this because we're against YouthCare or management. Just the opposite - we want YouthCare to be the best that it can be for ourselves and for the community we serve.

Because a union means a sharing of power, sometimes employers are initially resistant to the process. However, we hope management will be supportive of our efforts to make YouthCare more democratic and recognize that employee unions can create healthier, stronger, more sustainable organizations. We ask them to remain neutral in this process and allow staff to organize without interference.

We invite you to join us in this hopeful journey. If you have questions, contact any of us. We've attached an FAQ sheet with more details and contact information. Also, we are hosting a Kickoff Celebration this Wednesday evening, July 17 – just ask any of us for details, and please join us if you can to share ideas, ask questions, and get all the information you need to make this important decision about our shared future.

In solidarity,

Agueda Dudley Barrios, Housing Stabilization Case Manager, Prevention  
Andria Keirn, Over 18 Housing Career Coordinator, E & E  
Annarose Krug, Detention Case Manager, Prevention  
Calvin Linder, Case Manager, Hope Center  
Craig Gibson, Volunteer and Community Engagement Specialist, Development  
Deepa Ramdial, Youth Counselor, Passages

Dia Roth, Family Engagement Case Manager, Prevention  
Emily Penna, Program Coordinator, E & E  
Erin Halligan, Donor Database Assistant, Development  
Haley Hougen, Youth Counselor, Hope Center  
Heather Post, Mental Health Therapist, Prevention  
Helen Stroheker, Foundation & Corporate Program Specialist, Development  
Hilary Keyes, Youth Counselor, Adolescent Shelter  
Jazlyn Collins, Care Coordinator, Prevention  
Jixia Ao, Clinical Social Worker, Over 18 Housing  
Julia Raban, Street Outreach, Orion  
Katrina Go, Care Coordinator, Prevention  
Keanna Dandridge, Outreach Case Manager, Orion  
Leandro Pettino, Education Aide, Casa de los amigos  
Linzy Burton, Housing Navigator Case Manager, UDYC  
Mary Kerr, Education Aide, Casa de los amigos  
Meghan Gibson, Youth Counselor, UDYC  
Mitch Mitchell, Career Coordinator – Doorways, E & E  
Paris Chapman, Employer Engagement Specialist, E & E  
RJ Solomon, Life Skills Coordinator, Pathways  
Sarina Shames, Case Manager, Passages  
Sierra Masuda, Volunteer/In Kind Coordinator, Development  
St. Ennah Akudihor, Housing Navigator, UDYC