



**I actually lived on my own from when I was 15 until I was 17. I was homeless for a while. I was sexually molested by one of my mother's various boyfriends. My brother. I watched him get beat all the time. That's why I left. I was just fed up with it. The [YV LifeSet] program believed in me when no one else believed in me. It gave me the courage and motivation to apply to school. [My counselor] helped me realize that not only was I passionate about science but I could do a lot with it. Now I realize science is probably what I'm going to do for the rest of my life. When [YVLifeSet] came into my life, they gave me the motivation I needed and the resources to help me. I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for them.**

—Angelica, Youth Villages YVLifeSet participant

#### HOW EFFECTIVE IS IT

Compared to a randomly-selected control group, YVLifeSet participants experience measurable positive changes, including a 30% decrease in violent relationships, 22% decline in homelessness, and a 17% increase in earnings from formal work. These results are especially impressive because few programs working with this population have demonstrated *any* positive results at all. The cost of moving a young adult through the program is about \$12,000—well below the estimated \$20,000 to \$50,000 communities pay in social welfare costs for a chronically homeless person.

#### HOW YOU CAN HELP

There are no dedicated public funding streams for this type of program; 50% to 100% of the cost comes from philanthropy, depending on the jurisdiction. Philanthropic dollars provide YVLifeSet with the flexibility to better meet diverse youth needs. For example, many state contracts include funding for a maximum of six months. Philanthropy means that participants who need an additional two to three months to reach independence are not arbitrarily kicked out. Philanthropic funds also provide wrap-around services—sometimes for something as simple as a \$100 monthly bus pass to get to work. Finally, donor support has been key to bringing YVLifeSet to new locations. You can help cover the cost of providing YVLifeSet by donating to [Youth Villages](#) nationally or [find a local program](#) on their website.

#### PERSONALIZE THIS PROJECT

[The Foster Coalition](#) engages in advocacy to improve foster care and has additional resources and information on programs. [Foster America](#) places skilled professionals within state child welfare departments to strengthen existing government supports. In addition, [Youth Villages](#) and [Child First](#) work with families who are at risk to prevent foster care placement in the first place.

### NONPROFIT MAKING AN IMPACT

#### Youth Villages/YVLifeSet

##### WHAT IT DOES

Approximately 23,000 young adults in the U.S. age out of the foster care system every year. One in four experience homelessness, half end up unemployed, and close to 70% have been involved in the criminal justice system. YVLifeSet is an intensive 6- to 12-month intervention program. Participants meet one-on-one with a specialist at least once a week in settings conve-

nient to them, such as their home, school, job, or doctor's office. In addition to weekly meetings, YVLifeSet provides 24/7 on-call support.

Participants set their own goals for housing, education, employment, and other aspects of independent life. YVLifeSet specialists meet the young adults where they are—whether learning to do laundry, role playing conflicts with roommates, or practicing job interviews. The YVLifeSet specialist does not provide direct supports like housing or a job, but rather helps the youth develop the skills and capabilities to identify and put into place supports on his or her own.