



Tumbleweed
Lasting Change for Vulnerable Youth

The latest news and updates



ZAC'S STORY

Zac was born in Rapid City and moved to Billings about 5 years ago. He enrolled at Skyview High School, where during his sophomore year, he connected with Skyview's Youth Advocate and began receiving help with basic needs.

Family conflict led to difficulties in school, affecting his grades, connection to peers, and his sleep schedule- creating chronic insomnia. This prompted Zac to visit with the Tumbleweed Youth Advocate periodically throughout the week, and this helped him stay connected to school and the Tumbleweed team.

At the end of his sophomore year, he was sent to a behavioral treatment facility in Utah; where he stayed until his second semester of junior year.

Upon his return, Zac transitioned into a therapeutic group home, and resumed his education at Skyview. Then in the fall of 2019, Zac found himself moving around for 10 months between his mom's home, to couch surfing, to the men's shelter and finally a hotel. Despite his housing instability and the mental and physical obstacles posed, he graduated from Skyview High School with his class in 2020, while maintaining a job!

Throughout this past year, Zac maintained a connection with the Tumbleweed team which allowed him to progress from receiving basic human needs to working with the Housing Navigator to find a stable home.

Three days before Christmas 2020, Zac was able to move into his own apartment, talk about the perfect Christmas present!!

In this New Year, Zac maintains employment, is working to obtain his driver's license, and is seeking an affordable and reliable vehicle. Our Housing Navigator, Lona, makes weekly and case management visits and calls with Zac to ensure he maintains stability by addressing any barriers.

The Tumbleweed team is incredibly proud of, and impressed by, Zac's resilience and positive outlook on life. Zac shows this by sharing the quote that inspires him today.

"Make your life a masterpiece, imagine no limitations on what you can be, have or do." -Brian Tracy

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HOUSING SYSTEMS NAVIGATOR UPDATE

In October of 2020, Tumbleweed was able to hire a Housing Systems Navigator, Lona Forman, under the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project.

Lona's job is to coordinate with our youth and young adults, property owners/property managers and agencies in town that help facilitate independent housing to the clients we serve.

Finding and moving into their first apartment can be lengthy and complicated, as most of our youth and young adults do not have rental history, process knowledge, financial stability or co-signers to support them. Tumbleweed addresses these barriers by supporting youth and young adults financially as they are transitioning to independence. Case management is provided at least once a week and it addresses further issues from crisis intervention, mediation, counseling, food boxes, furniture, budgeting classes, life skill classes and basic understanding of community resources and rental knowledge.

Since Lona started, we have been able to house 3 youth and young adults, strengthen our community partnerships and obtain master leases for new properties. We invite you to help us spread the news of this new YHDP program, particularly to landlords and property managers.

If you or anyone you know would like to partner with Tumbleweed, please reach out to Lona at 406-259-2558 or lona.forman@tumbleweedprogram.org

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT & OPPORTUNITIES

Meet our AMAZING volunteer, Adrienne!

Adrienne has signed up to work weekly shifts in our food pantry. She sorts donations, stocks shelves, and makes sure we don't give out any expired food to our youth, and she also preparing food boxes for our youth and young adults! We don't know what we would do without her!

If you would like to join Adrienne in having an impact with our youth, you can visit and sign up on our website or call Sophia at 406-259-2558!

Hot Lunch

We are continuing our Hot Lunch program! These lunches are served to 25-30 youth and young adults during our Drop-In hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11-1 pm. If you'd like to participate, please sign-up on our website or call Sophia at 406-259-2558.

Current Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteers are needed to help organize the clothing area, hygiene room and Drop-In Center. Please contact Sophia if you'd like to schedule a time to come by and lend a hand!

We appreciate all of your support during this most challenging year for everyone, and a heightened stressed-filled time for our youth and young adults!



Goodbyes and Hellos

After 5 years as Executive Director, we wish Erika Willis a fond farewell as she moves to serve others at Rimrock Foundation. We look forward to crossing paths as we serve our youth and young adult clients. In the interim, Mary Hernandez has returned to assist the Board of Directors in its search for a new Executive Director and to work with staff during this transition.

"I feel at home at Tumbleweed and I appreciate the continued work of staff in reaching the at-risk and homeless youth and young adults in our community. Spending time at Tumbleweed allows me to catch up on the latest program changes and progress in serving clients and re-connecting with leaders across the state in addressing how we can better serve youth to end homelessness."

Mary Hernandez