



Tumbleweed
Lasting Change for Vulnerable Youth

The latest news and updates



TUMBLEWEED PROGRAMS

At Tumbleweed, we strive to serve our community and the most vulnerable youth and young adults by providing programs that are youth centric, flexible and individualized. We build genuine, trusting relationships and we view young people in a way that recognizes their strengths while taking into consideration the tremendous adversity and trauma they may have experienced.

Did you know? In 2019, we provided services to more than 800 youth and young adults.

Did you know? We provide 5 programs that drive the vision of ending youth homelessness in our community.

SCHOOL PROGRAM

Tumbleweed has Youth Advocates in 3 Billings Public High Schools. They provide crisis intervention, referrals for outside services, access to basic needs and case management to students at risk of homelessness or experiencing homelessness. They work closely with the teams in the schools to help students stay connected to school and their support system.

Youth who do not graduate from high school or get a GED are almost 4 times more likely to experience homelessness.

CRISIS INTERVENTION & FRONT DOOR SERVICES

We believe that one of our most effective tools is prevention of housing instability and homelessness. Our team provides 24/7 emergency services to youth and families during times of conflict and crisis. On any given day, our Tumbleweed team provides in person services to 20-25 youth and young adults outside the 505 N. 24th building. These services include: food, clothing, mail, hygiene products as well as case management, housing assessment and crisis intervention. Tumbleweed also maintains a 24/7 crisis line that is available to youth and families in crisis or experiencing conflict.

Family conflict is the primary reason that youth experience homelessness. Providing access to basic human needs and crisis intervention helps reduce vulnerabilities, homelessness and human trafficking.

HOUSING PROGRAM

Tumbleweed embraces a housing first model and housing is approached in every conversation with youth and young adults. Our team helps navigate the housing system, determine funding sources, provide case management and provide daily check in with youth and young adults.

A youth must be dry, safe and warm, in order to begin to work on addictions, mental health, employment, education and have long term positive outcomes.

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CHAFEE FOSTER CARE INDEPENDENCE PROGRAM

Tumbleweed provides support and case management for youth who will be or have aged out of the foster care system. This program supports foster care youth's education, extracurricular activities, college, tutoring, employment, transportation needs, housing and emotional support; all while keeping a healthy relationship with a Tumbleweed Youth Advocate.

Youth who age out of the foster care system are 25-37% more likely to experience homelessness. Tumbleweed begins working with them when they are 14 years old.

STREET OUTREACH PROGRAM

The Tumbleweed team provides access to services by meeting youth and young adults where they are. This program started in March when Covid-19 hit, in order to best support youth and families who were sheltering in place. Our team takes the Tumbleweed van to specific locations to deliver food boxes, provide case management, mental health support, complete housing assessments, and in some instances, reach youth and young adults who may not be accessing Tumbleweed services.

Developing trusting and permanent relationships is a primary goal that leads to transformational changes to the youth and young adults that we serve.

VOLUNTEER & WISH LIST 2020

You have found creative ways to serve our youth during the pandemic and we are grateful for the continued support!

We've started our Hot Meals program again! These are served to 25-30 youth and young adults during our Front Door Service hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11-1 pm. If you'd like to participate, please sign-up on our website at www.tumbleweedprogram.org/get-involved/volunteer/

Another way YOU can help us, is by donating items for our food pantry. We make 20-30 food boxes weekly, and we'd be most grateful for donations of the foods we need. Please visit our website to make an online donation or for information on pantry items or check out our Amazon Wish List at www.tumbleweedprogram.org/get-involved/provide-goods/

THANK YOU!

If you have any questions, please contact Sophia Rataj at sophia.rataj@tumbleweedprogram.org or call (406)259-2558



MEET- SOPHIA RATAJ

Sophia Rataj is serving as the Volunteer Coordinator at Tumbleweed for the year! She grew up in Birmingham, Alabama and attended college in New Orleans, Louisiana. She graduated from Loyola University last spring with a degree in English Writing and Secondary Education. She comes to us through the Jesuit Volunteer Corps Northwest in partnership with AmeriCorps. Sophia will be living here in Billings for the next year and is very excited to be placed at Tumbleweed! Serving and learning with youth is very important to Sophia. She is immensely enjoying the environment nurtured at Tumbleweed. Sophia is looking forward to growing with the team over the course of this year!

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Most of us can name someone from our childhood who we knew would be there for us no matter what, someone who was in our corner. While this may seem like a simple thing, it is one of the most powerful factors that contributes to children and youth growing into healthy and happy adults. This is what we do at Tumbleweed, we fill that corner for youth and young people who may have never had anyone on their side. We do this by turning every stone, looking out of the box for solutions and by meeting youth where THEY are, not where we want them to be. We do this consistently and unconditionally helping them feel seen and loved. By supporting Tumbleweed by volunteering and donating you are also in their corner and we Thank You!

Be well and be happy- Erika Willis



Tumbleweed

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Mon-Thu - 7:30am-5:00pm

Fri - 7:30am-2:30pm

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