



Teens Find Help & Hope through Safe Place

Ryan* was 19 and alone. His mom had a substance addiction and he never knew his dad. He had been staying with friends off and on for about seven months. It was 11:00 PM when he returned to the house where he was staying and found his stuff in the driveway and a locked door. So he started walking. He'd gone about a mile when he walked into a QuikTrip where staff asked if he needed a Safe Place. When he answered "yes" QT staff called Synergy Services.



The team that responded from Synergy helped get him into emergency shelter and provided case management services starting with the basics like helping him get his social security card, his state ID and apply for SSI benefits. Eventually a spot opened up for him in Synergy's long-term housing program for youth and young families. Stable housing gave him a chance to catch his breath and make a plan. While in his Synergy apartment, he continued to receive support services designed to give him the foundation needed to live independently.

Ryan later told Synergy staff that he was ready to give up that night. But he stopped at QuikTrip and a friendly staff person approached him and asked if he needed help. Then the people from Synergy came and offered options and safety and kept supporting him. For the first time in his life, he believed someone cared. He had adults in his corner ready to help him find his way.

"You guys just really never give up on people, even when we give up on ourselves," he said.

As we wrap up National Safe Place week, we are proud to highlight this critical safety net that provides access points throughout the community for young people to get help and find hope for a future they can't yet imagine but need to believe in.

*Name changed to protect privacy

In Memoriam - Ann Whitty

If you've been involved with Synergy, you likely crossed paths with our long-time friend and board member Ann Whitty. Ann fought cancer valiantly for a number of years and chose to keep moving forward with life throughout it all.

Her positive outlook served her well in life. Ann became an engineer before many women were engineers and eventually served as CEO of Alcoa in China and Australia. Following her retirement, she led numerous professional boards, and devoted her leadership skills and business acumen to assist non-profits—with Synergy as one of the lucky recipients of her expertise and dedication.



Whether supporting a Synergy special event, working at the polls to help pass the Clay County Children's Service Fund or rolling up her sleeves to help the agency succeed with its capital campaign, Ann always set the bar high. She combined her leadership, generosity and experience to make the world better, and she will be greatly missed by all of us at Synergy. **Her obituary can be found here >>**

News & Events



Art Soup Success

The hard work of Synergy's Junior Board was evident as this year's Art Soup event raised a record \$13,000 for art therapy programs throughout the agency. Thanks to our guests, the eight restaurants who provided soup and our generous sponsors who came together to make the evening possible. A hearty congratulations to Bonefish Grill whose lobster bisque won the best soup award! **Check out photos from the evening here>>**



Kindness is Contagious

Ever want to take a break from all the negativity in the world? Surround yourself with stories of kindness and celebrate its ripple effect at our 29th annual Kindest Kansas Citian Awards Dinner on May 3 at the North Club at Arrowhead Stadium! Join us in honoring our 20 Kindest Kansas Citian Award winners and celebrating the kindness and generosity of the Carey & Todd Crossley family and the Jeanne & Byron Thompson family. **Reserve your spot today>>**



Leading the Way

We love to collaborate with organizations like **Northland Regional Chamber of Commerce** in developing the next generation of community leaders! We had a great time



Spread the Word about Safe Place

On any given night, an estimated 2,000 area teens are on their own without a safe place to live. Safe Place can help, but it only works if people know about it! Check out the segment

hosting the Chamber's youth leadership class, and the children and teens in our shelters loved the encouraging Valentine cards and gifts the young leaders provided!

that aired earlier this week on KC Live highlighting Safe Place as an important resource for young people in our community. **You can watch it here>>**