



*"I help where help is needed."
-HYPE emerging leader Shay Coston*

HYPE Helping Youth Perform Excellence

"HYPE helps youth engage and invest in the community, which then helps decrease crime and violence," shares Kelli Lauritzen.

Kelli, along with Charissa Eggleston, lead the HYPE program. HYPE is a community intervention program for kids ages 14-18 who are on or at risk or being on juvenile probation. It's also part of an alternative to secure detention, as youth who are incarcerated are more likely to reoffend.

The HYPE program is a bi-weekly weekend program to help youth learn leadership and other skills. Each weekend has a theme. The kids come to hear from people that reflect their own demographic and are from their own community. They hear from community leaders, learn how to cook from chefs, and also do community service projects. They also get assistance achieving goals such as getting a food handler's permit, completing driver's education, or getting specific certifications for different types of employment.

HYPE can also provide additional learning experiences outside of the program for individual youth, the only requirement is that they come back and teach that skill to the rest of the group.

Kelli and Charissa both have lived and been involved in the Federal Way community for a long time. Kelli is with the juvenile probation department and Charissa worked for the school district. Both also have high-school age kids. They have seen an increase in violence among the community's young people, and wanted to do something about it.

HYPE is a neutral place, where even those who may have had a previous altercation, learn to get along and work out their differences. It also gives the youth an opportunity to meet new friends.

"Our hope would be to keep kids out of the juvenile system to begin with, because once a kid is involved in the system, that is one more barrier," shares Charissa.

HYPE can help reduce barriers for these youth to help engage them in the community and in positive activities. This may be as simple as pro-

viding funds to join an organized sports team and get a uniform, or to attend a specific career training program.

Seventy-one percent of the youth referred to the program are no longer on probation and have graduated. Of those eligible to work, 48% are currently employed. Once youth graduate the program, they often continue to attend and they become youth leaders.

HYPE is supported by the Federal Way Youth Action Team (FWYAT). The FWYAT works in the community to engage and connect youth who are at risk of involvement or have been involved with the juvenile justice system.



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