



CAREER CONNECTIONS

SECOND CHANCES AND HOPE FOR YOUTH
\$1000 SPONSORS A YOUTH JOB FOR THE SUMMER
WHOSE LIFE WILL YOU IMPACT?



Check out our new PODCAST! "Escape The Bubble" shares the stories of HEROIC youth from Escape and explores how we can be a more helpful community.

Find it on Spotify, Apple, or Google Podcasts!



PUT OUR YOUTH TO WORK!

Hello Friends, Families, and Supporters,

As Founder, Executive Director, and Pastor of ESCAPE, I pride myself in speaking the truth on what is truly going on in our community and with our youth. This year we were told to shelter in place, and over 40 million people filed for unemployment. Many low-income homes were hit hard. The staff at ESCAPE did not take this time off though! We were still working hard to keep our kids doing their schoolwork when schools closed their doors. We are so thankful to our banquet sponsors who let us use those funds to get ESCAPE through the quarantine.

We were saddened when we heard about some youth break-ins and vandalism in our community. There have been 3 shootings that were labeled as gang-related. These things sadden me because ESCAPE has worked hard to employ over 487 Holland-area youth in 7 years. In our first two years of the program, the juvenile crime rate dropped by 76%. It's time to get our youth off the streets and back to work. **"Nothing stops a bullet like a job."** It's time to put some very good people in their lives to show them how to work hard and how to live right. It's time for us to put kids to work so they can help their families and support themselves, and feel proud. Can you be a part of this? Will you support a youth that wants to work this summer? It takes a village to support, love, and lift up a youth especially in these times. GOD BLESS.



-Pastor Willie James Watt Jr.



THE POWER OF A JOB

AN OPPORTUNITY IS LIKE A SHOVEL.

We challenged the youth at the 2020 Career Connections orientation with this image: Opportunity is like a shovel (or any tool): You can accomplish a lot with it, but if you leave it lay there or use it the wrong way, it won't do much for you. Career Connections gives youth opportunities to learn work skills, form meaningful relationships, and earn money over the summer. It's up to THEM to capitalize on their opportunities! But how can a kid learn to use opportunities if they never GET an opportunity? It's hard to dig a hole with bare hands...

I remember the day we dropped Carolina off at her job interview at Hampton Inn after completing 2 years with Career Connections. She said, "I was nervous. I didn't know if I could do hospitality cause you gotta talk to lots of strangers. But now I got used to it and I actually like it! At ESCAPE, I feel like I learned what I need to for this job. It pushes us to do our best and be our best, and I want to keep that positivity in my life." Carolina makes the most of her opportunities: she is part of ESCAPE's tutoring club, Ladies' Bible Study, and with CultureWorks' art workshops. "Escape's been like a family for me through everything," she says. Last year's Career Connections youth are now working at Burger King, Subway, IHOP and more...and they're prepared for the opportunity!

We've interviewed over 65 youth so far, but only had 33 jobs when we started on June 16. A job is EMPOWERMENT for a young person. With your help, we can give another young person the opportunity to work in the community starting in July!

Can you help us provide them with that opportunity by sponsoring a youth for the summer?



DISTANCE LEARNING

If you found it difficult to be productive during quarantine, you're not the only one! Many students needed some "extra convincing" to get school assignments done from home.

Fortunately, ESCAPE teachers kept motivating them through text, calls, FaceTime, and shared screens to get classes done! They are now doing summer school for those who still need to catch up for next school year. If we don't believe in them, who will? They can only support the expelled students in ASAP with your support!



Education staff were online daily pushing students to finish online classes and improve their grades .

WHO WILL YOU IMPACT?

YOU can help bring more relationships, resources, and opportunities to youth like Carolina through Career Connections.

What does that look like?

- Sponsor a youth's summer job (\$1000)
- Hire a team to do manual labor or landscaping at your place.
- Donate rakes, shovels, pitchforks or gift cards for tools.
- Come visit for lunch and share your career with youth!



KEEPING FAMILIES FED

The shutdown left thousands in our community without work and in need of the essentials. We normally provide 20 food boxes a month, but since March we've been able to distribute 180 baskets in 10 weeks, complete with food, hygiene items and cleaning products! People have been relieved and so thankful to be able to put stock their cupboards again. A BIG thank you to those who have helped!



GET YOUR TICKETS NOW!

ESCAPE Fundraiser Dinner
Tuesday, September 15
@ Civic Center 6pm-8pm
Tickets: escape-out.org/donations



ESCAPE THE BUBBLE PODCAST

SHARING STORIES. CHANGING WORLDS.

On Escape The Bubble Podcast, you'll hear the stories of youth who have overcome losing parents, uprooting, expulsions, and incarceration.

Understanding their stories helps us "Escape Our Bubbles" and the way we see the world So, in a sense, we're changing the world!

Let their voices be heard. Listen, subscribe and share on Spotify, Apple, or Google Podcasts!



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