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## Self-Sufficient Youth

University of Dayton

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# NEWS



*Thursday September 18, 2014*

## Self-Sufficient Youth

The University of Dayton will partner with local homeless programs to lead an AmeriCorps program focus on youth economic self-sufficiency.

The University of Dayton is partnering with three area homeless programs to assist local youth experiencing homelessness to become self-sufficient.

Greater Dayton and Montgomery County have a significant population of vulnerable youth (16-24) who experience one or more of the following: aging out of foster care, transitioning out of the juvenile justice system, mental illness or disabilities, and homelessness. Many are in transitional living situations, are unemployed or underemployed, undereducated, and have limited opportunities to take part in activities that promote long-term self-sufficiency.

Beginning this fall, 25 University of Dayton students and seven youth from Daybreak will become AmeriCorps members tasked with changing these realities. The University's Fitz Center for Leadership in Community, together with partners from Daybreak, St. Vincent de Paul men's and women's homeless shelters, and, in future years, Homefull, will operate Youth Economic Self-Sufficiency (YESS AmeriCorps).

The AmeriCorps members will provide help with tutoring and GED completion, guidance in applying for and enrolling in college, skills related to employability and job retention, personal finance, and self-care that supports health, wellness, and positive social outcomes. The Corporation for National and Community Service will invest \$137,217 in the first year to provide living allowances ranging from \$1,200 to \$12,100 to AmeriCorps members who will serve between 300 hours and 1700 hours during the year.

"At the University of Dayton, we want to educate students to pursue justice and the common good and to put community priorities first," said Kelly Bohrer, University of Dayton director of community-engaged learning. "YESS is a community-engaged learning project in which we demonstrate the values of community and reciprocity."

Lane Gibson is one of the University of Dayton students who will participate in this inaugural year of YESS. She recently spent a semester as an intern at Daybreak and jumped at the chance to continue working with the staff and the youth.

"During my semester of service at Daybreak, I learned a lot about the Dayton community and how important community engagement is," said the senior communication management major from Toledo. "I grew as a person, and it promotes openness between the University, its students and the larger Dayton community."

YESS is the second AmeriCorps program to be awarded to the University of Dayton. The other was SWEAT, Serve with Energy and Talent, that was active from 1994 until 2001.

Linda Kramer, chief executive officer of Daybreak, summed up the shared vision of the grant team. "Our ultimate goal is to break the cycles of poverty and homelessness and create self-sufficient, responsible citizens in our community."

The AmeriCorps grant is made through ServeOhio, the Ohio Commission on Service and Voluntarism. The University of Dayton, through the College of Arts and Sciences, will provide \$57,042 in direct and in-kind support. The Fitz Center will direct the federal grant with support from the University of Dayton Research Institute and three teams of staff and faculty leaders and professionals from the partner organizations.

### **About ServeOhio**

ServeOhio, Ohio's Governor-appointed commission on service and volunteerism, administers AmeriCorps funding that targets areas of education, opportunity, healthy futures, veterans, environmental stewardship and disaster services. Read more at [www.serveohio.gov](http://www.serveohio.gov).

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