

Rosey - transitioning out of foster care

"I wouldn't have made it this far if it hadn't been for the YMCA."



Rosey is a participant in the
YMCA Independent Living Program

Rosey's Story

Growing up presented Rosey with challenges difficult for any adult to cope with, let alone a child. When she was only nine years old, Rosey's father passed away. Motivation became a struggle throughout high school because she felt that no one truly cared for her. Because of some bad circumstances she was forced to move and was unable to complete her high school diploma.

Eventually Rosey found herself at the YMCA Independent Living Program. She worked with ILP staff to develop life skills and set goals. In a Career Development Workshop, Rosey told YMCA presenter Nora Riemenshneider that she was interested in following in her father's

footsteps doing carpentry work. Nora referred her to Youth Build, an education and job training program at Renton Youth Source. Rosey enrolled in the program, which even offered a carpentry apprenticeship.

Once Rosey made it through "The Challenge", a three-week training class required in order to join Youth Build, she flourished in the program. Youth Build participants spend half of each day working on their diploma or GED, and spend the other half of the day in either job training or at their apprenticeship site working with Habitat for Humanity to build houses. She loves the sense of accomplishment that comes from seeing houses built from the ground up and thrives off of the sense of community this work brings about. "The first house we built, the family moved in and then that same family helped build the next house," says Rosey. "It's really nice because you just don't see a lot of things like that."

Last March, Rosey went to Washington DC with other Youth Build participants to be part of the Young Leaders Council. The Council brings participants from each of the 46 Youth Build sites across the U.S. together, giving them a chance to talk about what they do and how the program has affected their lives. Rosey was elected one of 60 youth to serve on the National Young Leaders Council by writing and giving a speech to all the attendees, and got the chance to meet Senator John Kerry, who is one of Youth Build's major supporters, and Dorothy Stoneman, founder of Youth Build USA. As part of the council, Rosey attends monthly meetings in other states, where she meets with other members and attends workshops.

Rosey graduated from Youth Build and received her GED in June. Since joining Youth Build, Rosey feels that she has changed a lot. She feels that she has become more motivated, developed leadership skills, become more ambitious, and learned how to be an independent adult. Her participation has also provided her with a group of people whom she trusts and who care about her. "Before I had so many problems with my family that I didn't feel like I had a family," she says, "but coming to Youth Build makes me feel like I have a new family now."

With future plans that include work and college (perhaps to study cosmetology), Rosey is feeling on track. She thanks ILP for getting her to Youth Build.

"The YMCA has helped me a lot," she says.

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