EDUCATIONfirstYOUTHfoyer

Brotherhood of St Laurence
Working for an Australia free of poverty

Launch HOUSING IT'S TIME TO END HOMELESSNESS

Education First Youth Foyers Mentoring Program

Are you interested in mentoring at the Foyers?

Purpose: To connect students with an interested and committed adult who can help them explore the student's personal and professional aspirations for the future and provide them with guidance, support and encouragement.

About Education First Youth Foyers

Launch Housing, in partnership with the Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL), has led the innovative Education First Youth (EFY) Foyers in Victoria. We have driven the development, implementation and delivery of the state wide EFY Foyer program with the Victorian Government. Launch Housing is the foundational service provider of the first two EFY Foyers at Holmesglen TAFE in Glen Waverley and at Kangan TAFE in Broadmeadows.

Foyers provide student housing for up to two years while residents receive individualised support and undertake education and training to gain the skills to transition to independent living and employment. Our student accommodation is for young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, and want to study. Young people at the Foyer are:

- Aged 16 to 24 years
- Unable to live at home
- Keen to get into education and training
- Willing to make a commitment to stay in education and training.

They are provided with:

- Learning tools and skills to help students follow their dreams and aspirations
- Access to education, training and employment opportunities
- A safe, secure and affordable place to live for up to two years
- 24 hour on-site support from trained staff
- Opportunities to participate in community activities.

Education First Youth Foyers Mentoring Program

Often young people who have experienced homelessness lack access to opportunities, networks and resources that other young people get from their families and friends.

The mentoring program aims to connect Foyer students with an interested and committed adult to help them explore their personal and professional aspirations for the future.

The relationships provide guidance, support and encouragement – such as goal setting in education and employment.

This program continues to provide social connections and networks for these young people, which helps immensely in building sustainable lives.

Role of the Foyer Mentor

The role of the mentor is not a support worker – each student already has a Youth Development Worker. Broadly, the role of a mentor is to spend time with a student and:

- Offer guidance, support, encouragement
- Offer a consistent, non-judgmental relationship
- Encourage and support the young person to develop relationships as they work towards their goals
- Share knowledge about your education, career and life experiences to assist the mentee in their own education, career and life journey
- Help promote your mentee's self-esteem and identify/recognise their strengths
- Help with goal-setting, suggest possible courses of action, and support your mentee in making choices
- Help mentee develop their skills
- Encourage mentee to weigh up situations and to come to decisions themselves through a process of reflection, questions, challenge and feedback
- Be a sounding-board for ideas and problems.

The focus of the program is on engagement in the experience of establishing and maintaining trusting relationships: those that encourage social confidence and emotional wellbeing.

Commitment Required of Mentors

- Submit an Expression of Interest (EOI), undertake an interview, provide two referees contacts, consent to a Police Check and Working with Children Check and Volunteer Induction.
- Participate in formal training which entails attending at evening sessions:
    - Induction Session (mentors only)
    - 4 group training sessions and mid program progress session (with young people)
    - Other activities and celebrations
- Commit to nine months of mentoring
- Meet with mentees at least once a month
- Contact their mentee by phone or email at least once a fortnight

Training sessions

- Induction session – Mentors only
- Group training sessions – Mentors and Mentees – once a week for one month

The following provides an overview of the types of information provided in training:

INDUCTION MENTORS	Overview of Foyer: students profile Education participation levels Issues related to youth, homelessness and risk
INDUCTIONS MENTEES	Requirements of the students What the mentors bring and why Hopes and Fears
Training SESSION ONE	Ice breaker: Who's in the room activity? What we have in common? What are we like Advantaged Thinking: What is it? Scenario? The Service Offers: what are they? Presented by young people Goal setting Listening skills Boundaries Using the manuals and what's in them
TRAINING SESSION TWO	Relationship Cycle (Plateau) Active listening How to stay curious How to give feedback Who do you call: the rules for mentors and mentees
TRAINING SESSION THREE	Matching Writing the agreement Setting the first meeting Exchanging contact numbers Brainstorming Activities

Program Commitments

- Abide by the Mentoring Agreement and the Mentor Code of Conduct
- Ensure a safe and supportive environment for each meeting
- Respect the rights, dignity and privacy of mentees
- Be open, honest and respectful in all communications with the mentee
- Keep all commitments regarding the scheduling of meetings and contact with the mentee
- Keep a record of meetings/contact with mentees: dates, time, contact type, duration
- Maintain a professional and ethical working relationship with Foyer staff
- Disclose information that is relevant to the safety and wellbeing of the mentee to Foyer staff
- Participate in an evaluation of the program
- Utilise an Open Talent and advantaged approach to working with young people

Our approach in working with young people

The Education First Youth Foyers employ an Advantaged Thinking and Open Talent approach.

Advantaged Thinking is a philosophy about using the advantages we possess as humans – our assets, talents, resources and abilities – to create the conditions for a society in which everyone can thrive. Rather than getting lost in the safety net for supporting people's disadvantages, Advantaged Thinking looks for the springboard of positive action that will bring about sustainable change - by being better connected to people's goals and assets.

Open Talent is a new approach that emphasises talent spotting and talent building. Inspired by the life-coaching model, Open Talent calls on those who work with young people to consider talent in the broadest possible sense; it is not an elitist word. Talent can be any positive characteristic or ability. By identifying and investing in these positives we can truly make a difference for young people and enable them to make a successful transition to adult independence.

If you are interested in mentoring or have any questions, email us!

Launch Housing Volunteer Program Team – volunteer@Launchhousing.org.au