



CONFIDENCE, STABILITY, INDEPENDENCE, AND HELPING OTHERS. A RISING UP CLIENT'S JOURNEY.

This is a story about a young person who seized the opportunity to use the services offered through the Rising Up initiative to get a fresh start in life. The Interim Rising Up Program Manager for Larkin Street Youth Services, Glenda Dayao, was kind enough to share this story with us. (Please note, in writing about this young person, we will use they/them pronouns).

Our story begins at the outset of the pandemic. Our young person was at a low point in life. Growing up, their parents could not be relied upon to provide for them. They had gone out on their own at a very young age, seeking to build a better life. Now, at 24 years old, our young person was homeless. As part of the city-wide effort to help homeless people get off the streets at the beginning of the pandemic, they were placed in a Shelter in Place (SIP) hotel. Yet, while the hotel provided shelter, it was only ever going to be temporary.

While at the SIP hotel, our young person went to the access point at Larkin Street Youth Services to learn about what other housing would be available. They were, at that time, put on the waiting list for Rising Up Rapid Rehousing. While waiting for housing to become available, our young person became actively involved in opportunities that Larkin Street presented to them. Our young person represented Larkin Street in the community as an outspoken advocate on behalf of the rights of Trans and LGBTQ youth. They sat on Larkin Street's Youth Advisory Board, and they spoke up at city hall, uplifting the voices of trans and LGBTQ youth. It was clear that our young person took the initiative to seek help, and more importantly, act upon that help.

An apartment in San Francisco became available through the Rising Up program for our young person and their partner. The move into the apartment gave our young person even more confidence to move forward. They looked for employment and found a position as a program specialist role at a local nonprofit. In that role, our young person has created and now conducts queer sex-ed workshops and sexual health workshops. They also act as a peer counselor to the young people who use the services of the organization.

Our young person has fully embraced this job. They can work from home a few days a week, they have been given a lot of autonomy, and they especially like the fact that they have been given the opportunity to create something new from the ground up. Our young person has a high school diploma and may go on to college, but for now they are really enjoying the job. This is their first professional full-time job and it's been a great fit.

Finding employment has given our young person the ability to be independent. Moving forward, they are currently contributing at least 60% of the rent and they are carefully planning so that they can pay their rent in full before the Rising Up subsidy is used up. When they exit the program, they plan to stay in the apartment they are currently sharing with their partner.

The Rising Up initiative offered our young person the opportunity to create a better life. They had the courage to make the very best of this opportunity - gaining confidence and stability, acquiring a job, becoming independent, and ultimately helping others in their own journeys.