



## GREETINGS FROM NRS

Dear Friends,

Throughout the year, we participate in meetings and conferences hosted by leading national organizations who are collectively working to prevent and end youth homelessness. At these events, we learn, make connections and exchange ideas. I especially look forward to meeting with and hearing from young people who are amplifying issues and solutions to make more progress toward our shared mission.

Just a few weeks ago, I joined NRS Youth Advisory Board member EJ Velez at the National Network for Youth's Summit and Hill Day in Washington D.C. He and other young people were taking action to ensure their voices are heard by service providers, policymakers and others. At NRS, we value the leadership demonstrated by so many passionate youth. They know what it takes to prevent and end youth homelessness, and we strive to incorporate their ideas and feedback into all parts of our work.

We're expanding the NRS Youth Advisory Board, recruiting more youth volunteers and showcasing the talents of youth at our upcoming Celebrating the Spirit of Youth event. We welcome young people with a range of experiences to join us in these efforts!

If you know a young person who would enjoy being involved with NRS, please let us know! I am always happy to help and can be reached [here](#). Or better yet, please contact [Em deCordova](#), NRS Prevention & Youth Engagement Coordinator.

With warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Susan Frankel'.

Susan Frankel  
Chief Executive Officer



**JOIN US ON APRIL 22, 2023  
for our annual  
CELEBRATING THE  
SPIRIT OF YOUTH EVENT**

*Honoring those who Make a Difference in the  
Lives of Young People*

Celebrating the Spirit of Youth is only a few weeks away, but there is still plenty of time to plan to join us!

**This special event will be held on April 22nd at the Radisson Blu Aqua Hotel - Chicago** and will feature dinner, drinks, games and live entertainment from Center on Halsted.

**We will be honoring advocates David Ambroz and Rachel Litchman**, both of whom are driven by personal experiences to redefine what's possible for youth experiencing homelessness and the myriad of challenges that young people face.

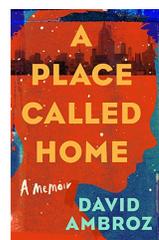
**NBC5 Chicago anchor Natalie Martinez and NRS Youth Advisory Board member Mia Sostrin** will co-emcee the evening.

This year's theme, **Writing the Next Chapter**, encourages supporters to help write a new story for the 4.2 million young people experiencing homelessness in the United States each year.

Collectively, we can change the trajectory to ensure all young people have access to resources and supports they need thrive. The funds raised will help NRS create



**GET TO KNOW OUR 2023  
SPIRIT OF YOUTH HONOREES**



As a preview to NRS' Celebrating the Spirit of Youth event, NRS's own Christopher Smith sat down with David Ambroz to record an episode of

the **"Let's Talk" podcast**. They discussed David's heartbreaking story of growing up experiencing homelessness and the foster care system, his work as a child welfare advocate and how we all can support children.

David's interview will be available on the [NRS website](#) or for download on Spotify, Apple Podcasts or Google Podcasts on April 3rd.

And, to get a glimpse into Rachel Litchman's activism, take a look at her original comics,



which were recently featured in the [Washington Post](#). Rachel shares why she hid her chronic illnesses in the workplace and how she fights ableism today. We are proud to support Rachel's advocacy for people with disabilities and congratulate her on being published in this top tier newspaper!

See the full series of illustrations here: <https://buff.ly/3JdZdXX>. You can also see the series without a paywall on [The Lily](#)

meaningful change and make a difference in the lives of young people.

Instagram page here: <https://buff.ly/3JgFvuL>.

For Celebrating the Spirit of Youth tickets and sponsorship packages, visit the event page on [nationalrunawaysafeline.org](https://nationalrunawaysafeline.org) or contact NRS Chief Engagement Officer, Liz Novak, at [enovak@1800runaway.org](mailto:enovak@1800runaway.org).

[Learn More](#)



### NRS YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS MEET WITH FYSB LEADERSHIP

Last night, our Youth Advisory Board (YAB) welcomed **Kimberly Waller, Associate Commissioner for the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) in the Administration for Children, Youth and Families**, to their monthly meeting. Board

members were excited to connect, ask questions and share feedback to inform FYSB's national efforts to prevent and end youth homelessness.

Ms. Waller provided updates about recent initiatives and efforts underway at FYSB and responded to comments and questions from members on a range of topics, including healthcare access for youth experiencing homelessness and making youth shelters safer.

As we continue to recruit youth with lived experience to join the NRS YAB, we look forward to sharing more details about how they are informing the national discussion about the impact of runaway incidents and homelessness among young people.

[Learn More](#)

### RECOGNIZING NRS VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH, MAX NERI

*“NRS has definitely supplied me with a lot of social intelligence skills, compassion and learning how to listen. My role with NRS has reminded me to keep the human element in mind in all interactions.”* – Max Neri, NRS Volunteer

The name Maxi Neri may sound familiar. Last fall we shared news of Max being presented with the **National Runaway Prevention Month 2022 Youth Ambassador Award**, and now, Max is being recognized by the NRS staff as the Volunteer of the Month!



More than two years ago, Max was looking for volunteer opportunities where he could personally connect with young people. NRS was an ideal fit.

Since starting as a NRS crisis services volunteer in 2021, Max has noticed an uptick of young people experiencing peer and social issues. “One thing that I found a little bit interesting, particularly after COVID, is that sometimes I’ll ask youth ‘have you talked to anyone about this,’ and the youth will say, ‘I don’t have any friends.’ A lot of youth had a whole year or two out of the school setting, so they couldn’t make new friends and new connections. If you have a home environment that isn’t comforting, that can make it hard to transition back into the school setting.”

In addition to volunteering with NRS, Max is currently a senior in high school and a member of his school’s psychology club. The club focuses on crisis prevention and increasing awareness of the school’s mental health services. Outside of his advocacy work, Max serves as a member of DECA, a business fraternity that strives to help young people channel their ambitions into achievements. During the summer, Max works at an urgent care clinic where he uses the skills he has learned volunteering with NRS.

Max’s favorite hobbies are reading and writing, and he develops ideas for novels and screenplays. While he hasn’t written a full screenplay or novel (yet), he appreciates having a relaxing, creative outlet. At the end of every day, he writes in a journal, recapping events and emotions and making sure to note what could make tomorrow a better day.

Congratulations to Max on being the NRS Volunteer of the Month!

## YOUTH IN THE NEWS



### OUR VIEW: YOUTH HOMELESSNESS IS A PROBLEM WE CAN SOLVE NOW

**CENTRALMAINE.COM** | It’s the kind of story that you hope makes everyone stop, put everything else aside, and work tirelessly until something is done.

The number of kids in Maine who are living alone on the streets is on the rise. As Vanessa Paoletta of the Sun Journal [reported March 5](#), they face an immediate and intense struggle to get by



### THROUGH ACTIVISM, MARYLAND'S HOMELESS YOUTH ARE DRIVING SEARCH FOR SOLUTIONS

**MARYLAND MATTERS** | Young people are emerging as advocates in the crisis of youth homelessness in Maryland.

In Prince George’s, Baltimore, Frederick and Howard Counties, those efforts are focused at Youth Action Boards, which work to end young peoples’

day to day, and little hope for a better future.

But youth homelessness is a symptom of some of Maine's most difficult challenges — poverty, substance abuse, a lack of affordable housing — and while people are working every day to overcome them, solutions to those big problems seem far away.

So let's make them smaller.

homelessness.

"This gives [us] the opportunity to come to have a seat at the table with stakeholders and providers so they can hear what is really needed in the community," said DaeJanae Day, 26 co-chair of the Prince George's County Youth Action Board, her full-time job with the Department of Social Services, who was among four formerly homeless youth interviewed for this story.

[Read the Full Article](#)

[Read the Full Article](#)



Keeping America's runaway, homeless and at-risk youth safe and off the streets.



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