



*Support our Youth Center, Youth to Work,  
Paintball Field Programs  
✧ youth-led ✧ adult-mentored*

Give our Youth . . .  
Listen  
Empower  
Guide  
S kills . . . to Stand On

August 31, 2020

To: The City Council

Re: Housing for Ketchikan Homeless & the KYI Youth Community Center

Several weeks ago, representatives of Ketchikan Youth Initiatives (KYI) responded to a request to join with others from the City, WISH and the Day Shelter to visit the KYI Youth Community Center at 632 Park Avenue. The purpose of this meeting was to address the concept of fulfilling the needs of our community for crisis homeless housing to provide shelter housing in that building, particularly for the upcoming winter.

Ketchikan Youth Initiatives has been creating positive opportunities for youth in Ketchikan for over 16 years. In the early 2000's the culmination of our discussion with Ketchikan youth about their needs was the development of a youth center. The City responded to this need by generously gifting the old Water Warehouse under a Quit Claim Deed in July 2009 (right in the middle of the Great Recession) to be "used continuously, solely and exclusively as a youth facility...owned and operated by a nonprofit organization." KYI is currently 72% complete on the redevelopment process of this building to provide full operation.

True to our vision and mission the KYI Youth Community Center is created for the youth of Ketchikan, ages 14-24, to have the opportunity to have a voice in our future and provide a hub for tried & true programming such as the Youth 2 Work and work-ready programs like the Art Shoppe. Programming offered through the Center has always been available free of charge and commonly transportation is provided for youth to enable their participation.

**VISION: In community, teens and young adults are inspired leaders, essential voices and productive members of our society.**

**MISSION: Our youth-led and adult-mentored programs promote healthy activities, develop leadership skills and create a capable workforce of teens and young adults.**

In these times of pandemic with families out of work and increasing rates of drug and alcohol use we must consider not only the needs of the homeless population but also the long term impact this has on our youth, and the dire need for youth programming to continue to help support the young people silently impacted by this tragic pandemic.

In order to respond in the short term to the needs of our community for homeless sheltering during this time of crisis KYI offers the premises of the Old Water Warehouse building to be occupied exclusively as a homeless shelter for a period up to three seasons.



P. O. Box 6412 • Ketchikan AK 99901  
• admin@kyiyouth.org



Page two

This agreement requires the City to complete the construction to meet the needs of the homeless shelter and assures the property will not be encumbered by any unpaid debt. The term of this agreement is to end no later than April 1, 2023 and will clearly define responsibilities of each party. This provides a period of time for the City to facilitate an adequate long term solution for homeless sheltering in Ketchikan while KYI undertakes further defining its programming and operational plan for its sole purpose of serving our youth to benefit future generations.

Our community acknowledges there is a lack of resources for youth, particularly vulnerable & homeless youth. To better understand and meet these needs, KYI is currently undertaking a survey of the unfilled needs of “disconnected youth” ages 15 to 24 in partnership with the Ketchikan Wellness Coalition. The results of this survey expanded by interviews with selected participants and local service providers will provide meaningful direction to the future goals and objectives of Ketchikan Youth Initiatives.

While there are many details to be resolved, we appreciate the City’s offering KYI the opportunity to work together to accomplish completion of the redevelopment of the old Water Warehouse building thus assuring a “win-win” outcome for two community priorities: homeless sheltering and successful teen and young adult futures.

Sincerely,

*Signed electronically Altaira Wilhelm*

Altaira Wilhelm, Vice President  
KYI Board of Directors

Cc: Board of Directors