



# Funds Distribution Report

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**Recipient Organization:**

**Cocoon House**

**Address:**

3530 Colby Ave  
Everett, WA 98201

**Contact:**

(425) 259-5802  
<https://www.cocoonhouse.org>

**Organization's General Goals:**

Cocoon House has invested in key Equity, Diversity and Inclusion efforts to help map a plan for removing barriers and providing the most accessible and effective services and care for young people in marginalized communities.

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**Date of Award:**

2023 Q2

**Level:**

\$10,000 plus

For more information, please read the attached report from Cocoon House.

8802 27th Ave NE  
Tulalip, WA 98271

**TulalipCares.org**

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Tuesday, September 3, 2024

Marilyn Sheldon, Director  
Tulalip Tribes Charitable Contributions  
8802 27th Avenue NE  
Tulalip, WA 98271

Dear Marilyn,

Cocoon House thanks you for your continued invaluable partnership as we work together to break the cycle of homelessness. Your generous investment has helped to determine that our agency's continuum of programs supports youth and young people experiencing homelessness through each stage of need. Together, we have helped to ensure that youth are supported as they re-engage with schooling, reunite with family, build key relationships with supportive adults in their community, and gain life skills that will build them up to be resilient for the rest of their lives.

Recently, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development released an annual Point-in-Time Count, revealing a 15% increase in homelessness among youth and young adults nationwide since 2022, and a 28% increase in homelessness among transgender and gender non-conforming youth. These numbers are staggering, and make the efforts of Cocoon House staff and the work that we do feel more necessary than ever. As we reflect on the last year, we are acutely aware of the complex challenges faced by youth and young people experiencing homelessness in our community and the deep impact our agency can have on the lives of youth in crisis.

### **Agency Success**

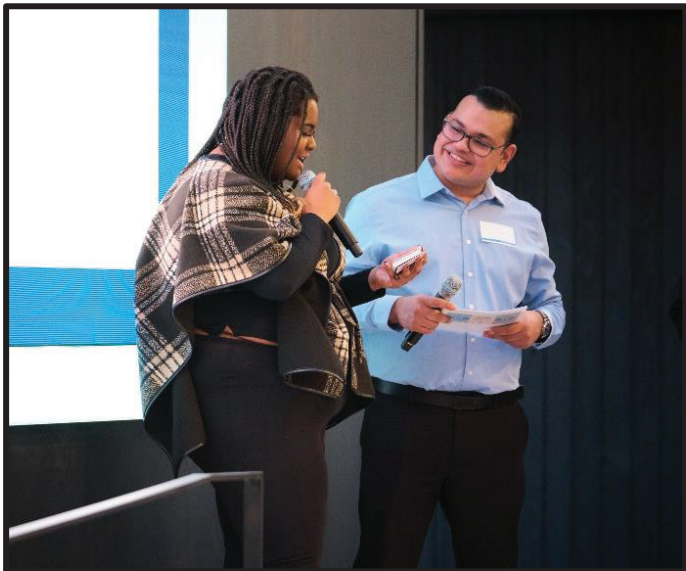
Our agency is incredibly proud of the work we have done in the last year. Each youth and young person served received the support they need to reconnect with their family, discover housing resources, find education and employment support, and access services that meet their individual needs. Some key outcome milestones from the last year include: 583 youth served in our U-Turn drop-in center and 270 young people enrolled in outreach case management; 12,577 basic needs items distributed through street outreach; 156 young people served through our under 18 housing programs; 25 young people served through our young adult housing program, 313 clients served by our Coordinated Entry program; 126 families served in prevention programming including case management; and 111 young people enrolled in specific employment and education services.



## **Agency Mission and Development**

Cocoon House has invested in key Equity, Diversity and Inclusion efforts to help map a plan for removing barriers and providing the most accessible and effective services and care for young people in marginalized communities. In the last year, our agency has committed to critical Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion efforts for staff and the community.

We have continued to work with Social Current, a collaboration of the Alliance for Strong Families and Communities and the Council on Accreditation. In alignment with our Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion strategy, our CEO Joseph Alonzo shared our EDI work with members of the Spark 2023 Conference in Bethesda, Maryland. This conference not only allowed Cocoon House to detail critical aspects of our training and partnership with Social Current and reflect on our own EDI work, but also allowed moments for collaboration with other non-profit organizations. Within this conference, our agency was provided with multiple techniques and methods in which to explore meaningful collaborations with diverse organizations. Cocoon House was able to partner with other non-profits in the community ensuring that we are building a vibrant network with diverse methods of serving young people in need.



*Lila, a Cocoon House Youth Board Member, sharing her story with the audience of our Butterfly Celebration.*

Also, in alignment with our Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion strategy, Cocoon House has continued to expand the ways that youth and young people are involved in decision making, planning, and coordinating of the organization's strategic plans. This year, we expanded the capacity for compensation for young people who add to the work of the agency mission. By rightfully compensating young people for their contributions to our organization, we have seen a vast increase in youth engagement in informing Cocoon House programs. Specifically, the Cocoon House Youth Board, a group of ten young adults with lived experience and understanding of our programming, worked with agency leadership how we support youth in Snohomish County. This not only includes policy and program development, but also involvement in key staff interviews, participation in agency videos and storytelling, and critical work with Snohomish County government action. This work is inspiring youth and young people to contribute to their community by supporting the development of Cocoon House; program staff is delighted to see the change that The Youth Board has been able to inspire.

## **Mental Health Support Expansions**

Due to post-traumatic stress, distrust in adults and systems, and other mental barriers, it is often difficult for youth to connect with Cocoon House staff and services upon their first introduction to our programs. While staff work incredibly hard to make connections as quickly as possible, natural responses and mental barriers to the supports we provide can make this difficult for youth. Staff have, however, discovered that non-

traditional methods to engage youth in case management services can prove successful in engaging youth with staff members.

In 2019, for example, the Cocoon House Music Program was created as a reaction to the positive influence of musical engagement within our housing programs. Raphael Elchols, a direct service staff at the time, was known for connecting with youth through the acoustic guitar he brought with him during his shifts. While teaching young people to play, Raph recognized that organic conversations about mental health, school status, family and peer relationships, and general well-being became much easier. With their focus on artistic expression, youth were able to connect with Raph and open up about their experiences.

Because of the music program, we have recognized the benefits of non-traditional methods of guiding youth through trauma, hardship, and crisis. Within our case management services, we have begun to incorporate other modes of artistic expression in order to engage with the youth we serve in a welcoming and safe environment. Cocoon House has begun offering therapeutic “Art Nights” to connect youth with Cocoon House staff. These activities, held within our outreach drop-in center, provide snacks, art supplies, the support of Cocoon House staff, and a safe environment. Youth are welcomed to express themselves, engage with case management services, and access the support systems they need to navigate mental and behavioral health challenges. These activities not only redirect potentially negative trauma responses, but also make space for youth to open up to supportive adults in their lives. These events are carefree, supportive, and healing social events for youth, and have helped to create environments in which our young people can thoughtfully engage in mental and behavioral health supports.



### **Continued Success**

Thanks to your continued support, our programs continue to provide safety and stability to youth in need. One of these youth, Nathan, for example, is noted for having shown resiliency and positivity throughout his time in our Transitions Program. At first, Nathan was often spending most of his time in his room, not engaging with staff or other youth. Since his stay, however, Nathan and the Transitions Program Manager have worked closely to ensure that Nathan receives the behavioral health care that he needed to succeed. The Program Manager has worked with Nathan to re-enroll him in school, contribute to the daily activities of the living program, and engage with other youth. Since working with our Program Manager, Nathan can often be seen laughing with other youth and staff members in the common area, rather than spending time alone in his room. Thanks to your support, successes like these are possible for youth experiencing homelessness. Thank you for partnering with us as we work to break the cycle of homelessness for youth in Snohomish County.

Sincerely,  
Molly Wilson  
Private Grant Manager