

Patience, grace and strength: Linda's legacy at HOPE 4 Youth



Linda Bryant had planned to use her first few months on the job as HOPE 4 Youth Executive Director to get to know her staff, tour the facilities and meet community partners. But COVID-19 quickly forced her into Plan B.

“The old saying is you hit the ground running,” said Linda. “I had to hit the ground flying.”

Within weeks of settling into her new office, Linda was packing it up—heading into quarantine and uncharted waters.

“I had managed remote workers on occasion, but the pandemic forced me to quickly figure out how to manage an entire organization remotely,” she said. “And I had to do it with patience and grace.”



Linda being interviewed on North Metro TV

Linda started by convening a crisis team whose top priorities were to find ways to continue support for young people at risk for homelessness and to assess the needs of staff, board members and volunteers.

Linda helped her team quickly pivot to new plans for offering services, including appointment-only supply distribution and socially distant case management. She also made sure staff was equipped with the technology needed for remote work and helped create new ways for volunteers to contribute from home rather than at HOPE 4 Youth facilities.

“Although the pandemic forced us to shut the doors, we never stopped serving young people,” Linda said. “We just did it differently so that those in need weren’t left to struggle on their own.”

As the pandemic dragged on and some people’s optimism dimmed, Linda says she focused on building a strength-based mindset among leadership and staff.



Linda (left) accepting a donation from U.S. Bank

“Out of fear, some individuals focus on the negative, but that’s not what we needed,” she explained. “My goal was to get staff to focus on what was working and how we were remaining relevant in a situation that was totally out of our control.”

Despite all the hurdles created by COVID-19, Linda and her team were able to achieve funding goals, hold on to longtime collaborative partnerships and even create some new ones.

As 2020 drew to a close, HOPE 4 Youth was poised to continue operating through and beyond the pandemic. But, moving forward, it will be without Linda.

After much reflection, she has decided to step down as HOPE 4 Youth Executive Director.

“The pandemic forced us all to look at work and life in new ways,” said Linda. “This is life-changing, but I feel like now is the right time to chart a new course for myself.”

Linda’s immediate plans include taking some time off to rest, reflect and rejuvenate as she considers

how to use her three decades of human services work in a repurposed role and capacity.

Linda says her only regret is how COVID-19 kept her from getting to know and working alongside more of the people connected to HOPE 4 Youth's mission to end homelessness. Still, she hopes staff, volunteers and donors will remember how she worked hard in 2020 to bring HOPE 4 Youth through the lockdown and the pandemic.

"I hope they'll recognize the gifts I'm leaving for the next leader," Linda explained. "A team that's filled with patience and grace—and good people who are able to see that the best is yet to come."