

Volunteer Spotlight

February 2017



Mary Nelson

Mary began volunteering with Youth Prevention Services (YPS) in July 2016 and is the first volunteer to support our new location at Gateway Park Apartments. YPS staff say Mary has incredible energy and has been a rock star from the start, which is incredibly valuable when building new relationships and programming at Gateway.

Mary is finishing her BA in Psychology from Washington State University – Vancouver and is using her volunteer experience with YPS to learn from youth with diverse backgrounds, build relationships in an educational and fun setting, and better understand how to support students with sensitivity to their unique situations and needs.

YPS staff are continuously impressed with how fluidly Mary can move from soothing a young child upset over a game to discussing the best superhero characters with some teens. It's clear the children have bonded with her and Mary says she'll never forget that feeling of transitioning from "just another teacher" to a trusted adult and mentor the children look forward to interacting with.

VOA Oregon has so many volunteer programs and Mary recommends folks don't hesitate to get involved. Working with staff and volunteers has contributed to her passion for helping others and fostered personal growth, as well. Volunteering provides an opportunity to find inspiration and develop personal talents and skills in addition to giving back to the community.

Mary is a joy to have in our program, and we're so lucky she chose us to spend her Thursday evenings with us!

Thank you, Mary, for supporting our youth!