

Where Are They Now? Katy Stevens *continued from page 3*

but is also a mentorship program,” explains Stevens. “Everyone who receives assistance from us is assigned a mentor who was previously houseless or is well versed in the field in which they want to receive their education.”

“It was such an honor to have her do that,” says Betsy Miller. “The way she presented it to us was that it was one small way she could say thank you and pass it forward, which I thought was such an incredibly human and heartfelt thing to do; that she realized that she received some help at a critical time and it propelled her forward to gain an education, and that education she received helped her become a more compassionate human being, especially towards people who might need some assistance. The compassion that I always saw in her is truly embedded in so many ways by the people that helped her.”

Stevens says that, unlike many education programs for homeless populations, scholarships through TMSF are available to, not only four year universities, but also a wide range of career

and education opportunities and entrepreneurial ventures, and have no age restrictions. “We want to support all forms of career and personal advancement,” says Stevens. “And not just direct people towards higher education because that doesn’t work for everyone.”

In addition, Stevens says her organization will do outreach to connect those in the houseless community with those that have homes. Stevens recently hosted a fundraiser for TMSF at her home in Southeast Portland on July 17. She invited several leaders of some prominent houseless camps in the Portland area to speak and talk with individuals and share their experiences about how they ended up living on the streets and how they make it work. “We wanted to put a face to this national homeless crisis and humanize the individuals who are in this situation,” says Stevens.

As part of initially assembling her nonprofit, Stevens had to gather a Board of Directors. To head her organization she turned to her old friend Souvanny Miller, currently studying law at Lewis and Clark College, who will serve

as Chair of the Board. Stevens will act as Executive Director. “Souvanny keeps everybody in line, including me, just like in high school,” says Stevens with a laugh.

TMSF will hold fundraising events every month for the rest of this year and is accepting private donations as well. Stevens says she hopes TMSF will give away 10 scholarships in February.



Stevens (right), with her friend Souvanny Miller, at her SE Portland home. Miller is the Chair of the Board of Directors for The Miller Scholarship Foundation.



Stevens spoke at a fundraiser for her foundation which is named after the Miller family who helped her when she was homeless.

capacity in her from eighth grade on. That she is living it and has embraced it is truly wonderful.”

Stevens says she will not receive any compensation as Executive Director, at least for the first year of operations. “In my opinion every dollar we raise should be going towards creating economic opportunities for these individuals who need them the most,” says Stevens. “I’ll work to develop my skills as a business owner and at managing volunteers and do my best to get as many scholarships out there as possible.”

In addition to her work with TMSF, Stevens recently accepted a position with SAFE of Columbia County and will be working part time at the Vernonia Health Clinic providing advocacy for survivors of domestic and sexual violence.

It has been a long and sometimes difficult 10 year journey for Katy Stevens, from the first days of December 2007 to graduating from both Vernonia High School and the University of Portland, to creating a career she can feel good about.

“It means the world to me that she is soaring as high as we knew she could,” says Betsy Miller. “She’s always been able to see outside her own world to the greater good. Vernonia should be proud that these are the kinds of people we are raising.”

For more information about The Miller Scholarship Foundation go to www.BeTheMillers.org.

“I’m thrilled that Souvanny is involved,” says Betsy Miller. “I can’t tell you how honored I am that Katy’s time with us meant that much to her. I’m ecstatic that what she wants to do with her life is help other people. I saw that

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