

Faces of HOPE: Steve Carter

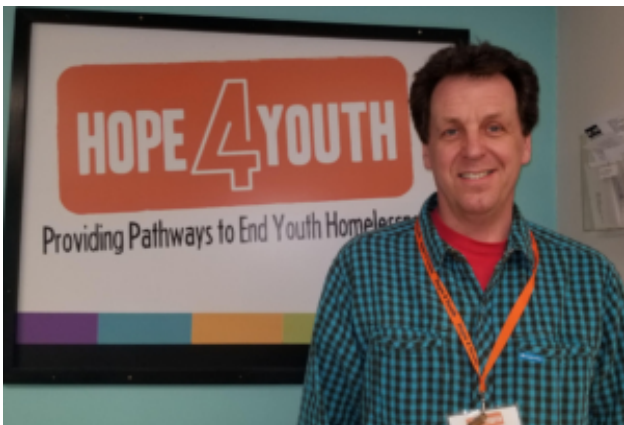


If Steve Carter had his way, you wouldn't see his name in the title of this story.

"It's not about me," Steve said. "The main thing is the difference you or I can make in the lives of the young people who visit HOPE 4 Youth."

Steve wasn't looking for a spotlight when he started volunteering as a [HOPE 4 Youth mentor](#). He was simply honoring his parents and the life they created for him.

"I come from a really good family—a mom, dad and two sisters, together," Steve explained. "I had a stable home. I wanted to pay forward that blessing."



Steve at the HOPE 4 Youth Drop-In Center

For the past five years, Steve has been supporting young people who stop by the [HOPE 4 Drop-In Center](#) in Anoka. As a mentor, he guides them through services offered at the center and helps them choose donations from the clothing closet and food pantry. But it's the time he spends with young people during the evening meal that is most rewarding for Steve.

"It's a really important time," he said. "They let their guard down and explain what's on their

minds.”

He says the meal creates a safe space for young guests, who are often overlooked, to be seen and heard by people who care.

“They may not have a single trusted adult in their lives,” Steve explained. “So they need someone who will be there and who will listen as they share their joys and their concerns.”

Except for time missed because of the pandemic, Steve has mentored every Monday for five years at HOPE 4 Youth. He makes a point to be there consistently, to learn the names of the young people who visit and to remember their stories.

“Often they just need some guidance,” he said. “I’ve got some life experiences. I feel that I can give them advice about things that they shouldn’t be doing, to steer them in the right direction; and also congratulate them when they make good choices and do the right thing.”

Steve hopes that his volunteering story might inspire you to start one of your own. If you do, his advice is simple: Pledge to make it a priority to be there on a regular basis, create consistency for kids who really need it, and really listen when they’re sharing.

“Make time to be that trusted adult, become that familiar face,” Steve added. “I think it’s an honor to be that person for these young people.”

This story is part of a series profiling people who’ve come together to support HOPE 4 Youth’s mission to offer young people pathways out of homelessness. [Read more profiles.](#)