



## San Diego Youth Services Spotlight Taylor Houston, Storefront Residential Counselor

Meet Storefront's Residential Counselor, Taylor Houston. The humorous and hard-working San Diegan was nominated by several of his co-workers and supervisors to be featured as the San Diego Youth Services Spotlight! Spend only a few moments observing him interact with youth at the shelter and you will know exactly why. It is Taylor's comedic personality and constant positive demeanor that make him a relatable mentor for the homeless youth served at the Storefront.

Since a young age, Taylor knew he wanted to help teenagers throughout the community. Growing up as a teenager himself, Taylor found the support he didn't receive from his own family through local youth recreational centers. His own childhood experiences help him relate with the youth he serves today. Taylor explains his role at the Storefront, as being a supportive adult to youth who have never had a support system. "I wake up in the morning and want to go to work!" he exclaims. Taylor says the best part of being a Residential Counselor at the Storefront night shelter is working with a great team and seeing the kids laugh. Taylor's supervisor, Michelle Atkins states, "When I hear laughter drifting into my office, I know Taylor is in the building. He lights up the shelter with his humor and energetic spirit. He is always supportive of his co-workers and shows true compassion for our youth."

For over seven years, Taylor has been providing a safe and nurturing environment for San Diego's at-risk, abused and homeless youth. Just like a family around the dinner table, Taylor facilitates groups with youth each night, discussing the highlights of their days, enjoying movie nights and educating them on the more serious issues including substance abuse prevention and independent living skills. Michelle recalls, "He has a way of making new youth feel so comfortable when they first enter the shelter. All our youth seek him out to discuss even the most personal of questions and concerns." A father of three, Taylor treats the youth he serves as if they were his own. When asked how many kids he has, his usual response is, "over a dozen". Michelle adds, "Taylor is busy with his amazing family of three children and his wife, yet he still comes in on Christmas Eve, dresses up like Santa Claus and hands out the donated presents to the youth at the shelter."

When Taylor isn't helping build dreams for the homeless youth in San Diego, you will most likely find him cooking, having popcorn fights with his kids or barbecuing with the family. A few of Taylor's many passions include spending as much time as possible with his family, being around happy and positive people and good food.

### Fun Facts:

Favorite Book: The True Blood Book Series

Favorite Movie: Disney's Original Robin Hood

Favorite TV Show: CSI

Favorite Food: Bacon

Favorite Restaurant: "I prefer cooking at home."

Favorite San Diego Spot: Crown Point

Favorite Vacation Spot: "Staycations!"