

NORTHSTAR ADVOCATES

YEAR 2025

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

FOLLOWING OUR NORTHSTAR: A YEAR OF
PROGRESS AND PARTNERSHIP

OUR MISSION

PREVENTING AND ENDING HOMELESSNESS BY SUPPORTING YOUNG
PEOPLE, STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES, AND
HOLDING THE SYSTEMS DESIGNED TO SERVE THEM ACCOUNTABLE.





A WORD FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

JIM THEOFELIS

“if you don’t know where you’re going any road will do”

At NorthStar Advocates, our vision is simple and urgent: to build a behavioral-health system that is developmentally and culturally responsive to young people experiencing unaccompanied homelessness. We believe in recovery—and in services that help youth get healthy, leave the streets, and build a strong foundation for life.

In 2025, even as a small, young organization, we delivered. The Bridge Coalition grew into a respected statewide forum—effective in advocacy, learning from national experts, and, most importantly, listening to young people about what works and what doesn’t. As you may remember, in 2024 we helped pass SHB 1929, establishing two intermediate Bridge Housing programs for 18–24-year-olds exiting inpatient substance-use or psychiatric care and at risk of homelessness. In 2025, together with the Washington State Health Care Authority and our provider partners, we moved from law to implementation: the programs launched, young people are receiving services, and we cut the ribbon at Friends of Youth in King County, with a companion celebration at Excelsior Wellness in Spokane slated for early 2026.

Looking ahead to 2026, state deficits and federal cuts will strain families and providers. The children, youth, and families we serve will be significantly impacted, with some predicting a sharp increase in homelessness due to policy changes and budget cuts. But at NorthStar Advocates, we refuse to give up on them. We will keep leading the Bridge Coalition, supporting Bridge Housing, advocating in Olympia, and launching our Behavioral Health Youth & Young Adult Summit—a series of quarterly discussions with young people surviving at the intersection of behavioral health and unaccompanied homelessness.

We know the path: rigorous data, a strong team, and youth at the center—as paid partners. That’s how we’ll navigate the year ahead.

We invite you to join us to support all young people to find their NorthStar!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jim Theofelis".

JIM THEOFELIS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

SHB 1929 PROGRAM LAUNCH
BRIDGE HOUSING RIBBON CUTTING
CEREMONY

[**WATCH JIM’S SPEECH HERE**](#)

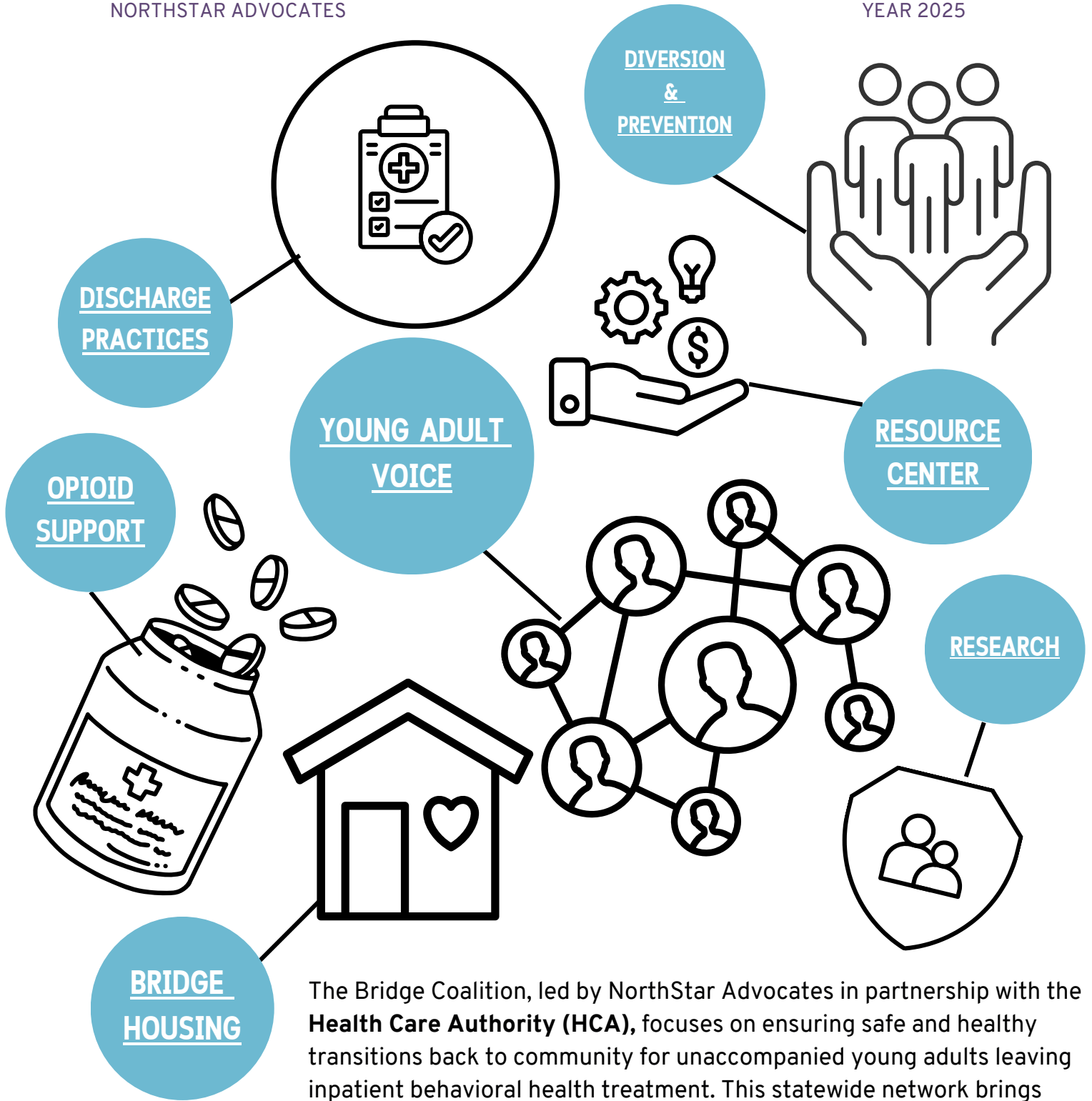


“IF YOU WANT TO GO FAST, GO ALONE. IF YOU WANT TO GO FAR, GO TOGETHER”

ORIGINS: AN AFRICAN PROVERB

Opening of SHB 1929 Bridge Housing Programs

In 2024, NorthStar Advocates spearheaded the unanimous, bipartisan passage of **SHB 1929**, establishing what we believe to be the first program of its kind in the nation—a statewide **Bridge Housing model** for unaccompanied homeless young adults exiting inpatient behavioral health treatment (Substance Use Disorder and/or Mental Health/Psychiatric Facilities). Over the past year, we have worked closely with the Health Care Authority (HCA) and provider partners, offering hands-on technical assistance, training, and guidance throughout program design, policy development, and implementation. This collaboration led to the successful opening of **Friends of Youth** on the Westside and **Excelsior Wellness** on the Eastside—both programs have officially opened and are providing up to 90 days of stable, intermediate housing and wraparound behavioral health support. Each young person develops an individualized Return to Community Plan—a holistic, wraparound case management tool designed by NorthStar Advocates and young people with lived experience across Washington State, created to help each individual discover their unique NorthStar and find their next best place in housing, recovery, and community.



THE BRIDGE COALITION

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW NORTHSTAR ADVOCATES TRAININGS](#)

The Bridge Coalition, led by NorthStar Advocates in partnership with the **Health Care Authority (HCA)**, focuses on ensuring safe and healthy transitions back to community for unaccompanied young adults leaving inpatient behavioral health treatment. This statewide network brings together government agencies, service providers, both Bridge Housing programs, and individuals with lived experience to collaborate and share solutions. Over the past year, the Coalition has focused on best practices for **discharge planning, parent advocacy, medication-assisted treatment, opioid use disorder response, prevention and diversion training, statewide housing resources, emerging research, and much more**. Together, this collective effort is transforming how systems respond to youth in transition—building a more coordinated, compassionate, culturally and developmentally responsive continuum of care.

YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SUMMIT SERIES

NorthStar Advocates is launching the Youth & Young Adult Behavioral Health Summit Series in collaboration with the Y4Y OHY Subcommittee, a statewide effort to elevate youth voice in system design and reform. This three- to four-part quarterly series will bring together young people with lived experience to share insights, identify opportunities, and shape a more developmentally and culturally responsive behavioral health system for young adults. Focus areas include Trauma-Informed Care, Individualized Recovery Plans, Life Skills, and Neurodiversity-Informed Approaches to Care. A youth-led steering committee has been established to guide planning and ensure authentic participation, with the first summit launching in Q1.



JIM & SARAH IMPACT



Sarah Spier Opioid Impact:

Co-chairs the Spokane Regional Health Fentanyl Roundtable's Post-System Care Workgroup, which is currently aligning with the Spokane Safe & Healthy Task Force to convene partners and share resources for a coordinated regional opioid response.

Jim Theofelis Impact Areas:

Office of Homeless Youth Advisory Committee: This is a Governor appointed position to support and advise the executive director and staff toward the mission of preventing and ending youth and young adult homelessness across Washington state. Jim was elected Chair by the other members of the Advisory Committee.

Washington state Children and Youth Behavioral Health Work Group: Jim is a member of this Governor appointed group that focuses on building a responsive behavioral health system from P-25-prenatal to age 25. This year the CYBHWG adopted a state strategic plan Washington Thrive.

A photograph of three young women standing outdoors in front of a white tent. The woman in the center is smiling and gesturing with her hand. The woman on the left has long reddish-brown hair, and the woman on the right has long brown hair and is wearing a blue denim jacket. The background shows the structure of the tent and some outdoor equipment.

90%

Nearly 90% of NorthStar Advocates' work is guided by individuals with lived experience in homelessness and behavioral health. Their voices help shape our programs and priorities, ensuring every solution is grounded in real experience and responsive to community needs.

\$35,000

NorthStar Advocates is committed to ensuring our work is guided by young people who have experienced the systems we are committed to shape and build. In 2025 we invested nearly \$35,000 in direct compensation and stipends to young people which has supported them to secure and retain safe housing, gain valuable work experience and networking opportunities while engaging and informing the work of NorthStar Advocates and state initiatives, community providers policies and practice.