

LAUNCH<sub>NW</sub>  
YOUTH COUNCIL 2025

# RISE Report

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# ABOUT US

Hello! My name is Kaylee Lemas-Santos, I am currently a senior at Rogers High School. I am the current 2025 Vice Chair for the Youth Council! I love giving back to my community and advocating for others. I want to pursue a degree in political science/history to later become a lawyer.



Hello! My name is Marie-Therese Bengehya and I am a senior at John R Rogers High School and Secretary of the 2025 Youth Council. I would like to pursue a finance degree and use it to better communities living in lack in the future



RISE - Resources for Independence, Skills, and Employment - is an employment-based project created by leads Marie-Therese Bengheya and Kaylee Lemas Santos. Partnering with UGM's Women and Children shelter, RISE provided support in job, housing, SNAP, and TNAF applications. The Project updated and expanded UGM's resource book to ensure families and individuals experiencing homelessness have current, accurate, and accessible information about essential services. RISE also created an "employment sheet," which showcased job opportunities that are compatible for working families with children as well as professional pointers necessary for employment. Along with this, RISE also organized a clothing drive which raised bags of winter clothing to help keep families warm this winter.

## INSPIRATION

Homelessness is a big problem in Spokane. Individuals do not have access to shelter and are often being turned away by employers, a pattern that is further exacerbated by a lack of access to professional dress, skills training, and transportation, which makes it challenging to reach stability. Seeing how rampant the issue of homelessness is and given a space to help through the LaunchNW Youth Council, Kaylee and Marie-Therese made RISE in efforts to aid those in need.

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## RESEARCH

- In 2023 alone, there was a 36% rise in homelessness in Spokane - has been decreasing in more recent years yet it is still an issue
- Due to a lack of interview skills and poor dress, homeless individuals are not being considered for jobs



Pictured above is a little kid at UGM who finally found comfortable gloves his size right after we delivered winter clothing.

## PROGRESS OF OUR PROJECT

Our project is wrapped up, with the last day connecting with the ladies at UGM being December 11<sup>th</sup> 2025. Our time at UGM centered on us helping the residents in any way we could. That meant filling out applications, providing warm clothing, providing up to date resources, as well as showcasing employment resources present with in our community. Resources we left will continue to be used for both short and long - term residents at UGM and in house caseworkers.

### **“We RISE by uplifting others!”**

Partnering with UGM to empower those living in homelessness, we believe that efforts to help the issue of homelessness should be individual centered instead of a collective solution. This means sometimes pivoting from the original course of action. The needs of every single person are different and proposing a one size plan ignores these differences because “not every shoe fits” As RISE, we have had to learn to work in a way that embraces these differences by meeting every resident “where they are at, whether that place is a need for gloves or filling out an application for Barnes and Nobles. We are willing to do what it takes for the good of our community, that is how we RISE by uplifting others.

December 11<sup>th</sup> was our final meeting with the ladies at UGM. We plan on delivering employment resources and having a final “Here to Help” day.

We hope that the individual needs of homeless individuals will continue to be considered following RISE and efforts to help with employment also flourish.