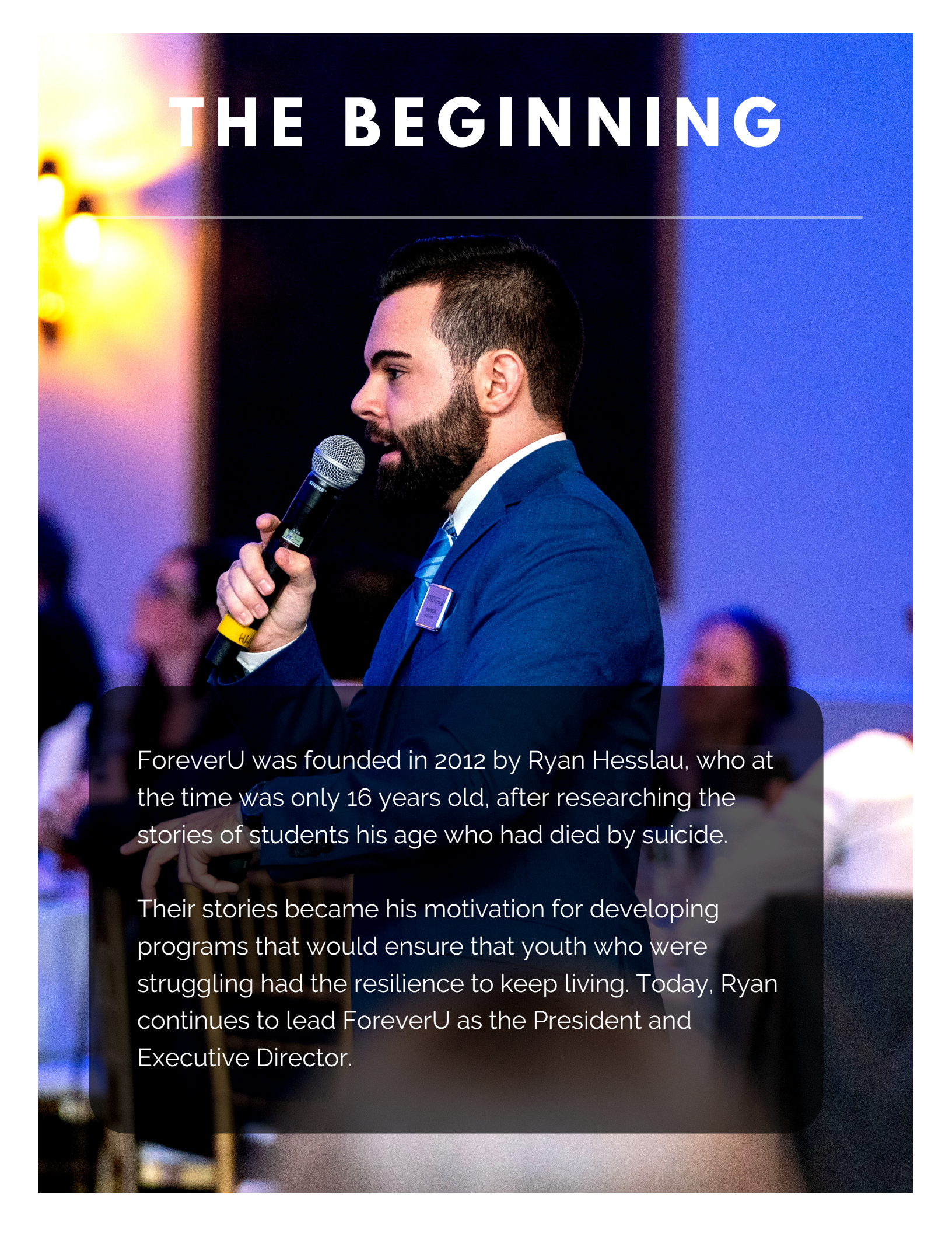


PARENTAL E-BOOKLET

THE MISSION

ForeverU is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that is empowering youth on their mental health journey through personal development programs and experiences.

THE BEGINNING

A man with a beard, wearing a blue suit and a blue tie, is speaking into a microphone. He is holding the microphone with his right hand. The background is blurred, showing other people and warm lighting. A semi-transparent dark blue box with rounded corners is overlaid on the bottom half of the image, containing white text.

ForeverU was founded in 2012 by Ryan Hessler, who at the time was only 16 years old, after researching the stories of students his age who had died by suicide.

Their stories became his motivation for developing programs that would ensure that youth who were struggling had the resilience to keep living. Today, Ryan continues to lead ForeverU as the President and Executive Director.

No matter where our students come from, we help them elevate their potential at school, at home, and in life.

Whether a student is battling depression, experiencing bullying at school, navigating a difficult home life, trying to manage their anxiety, or something in between, **we give them the tools to show the world what they're made of.**



Emotional Intelligence

We help students better manage their thoughts and emotions through practices built on mindfulness and self-awareness.



Character Development

We help students develop a growth mindset that leads to a life of resilience, confidence, and positive decision making.



Personal Achievement

We help students establish a sense of order and structure in their life through strategic goal setting techniques and exercises.

Disclaimer: ForeverU is classified as a youth development organization. Please know that our volunteers, employees, and representatives are not medical professionals. We are a community of individuals who are passionate about offering support and belonging to youth on their mental health journey. The information and programs we provide are meant to encourage and support students and is not meant to replace the advice or expertise of medical professionals.

Student Profile of Program Participants

Our personal development programs are highly encouraged for students grade 7-12 who are looking for a compassionate community of young people that provides program participants with a sense of purpose, hope, and belonging. To get the most out of their program experience, students who choose to participate should be open to personal growth and positive change, take responsibility for their own learning, and be supportive member of the ForeverU community.

PROGRAMS



One-Day Retreats

The first step a student takes as they begin their journey at ForeverU is participating in a one-day retreat. These retreats provide students with a fast-track to personal development and the power of a growth mindset. At this retreat, students will also be assigned a mentor and local peer group that they will have access to on a weekly basis at the end of the retreat.

www.joinforeveru.org/retreats



Overnight Camps

Students who are active in their assigned peer group are eligible to participate in our overnight camps that empower students with life skills and techniques that help them establish a road map for their ideal life path. These camps consist of self-discovery sessions with guest speakers, group discussions, personal growth and mindfulness workshops, and other activities that introduce students to the greatness within them.

www.joinforeveru.org/camps



Online Classrooms

ForeverU offers online "masterclass-style" courses that equip students with knowledge and insight that prepares them for all seasons of life. These classes are voluntarily facilitated by our network of ForeverU partners and will be offered through our website on a weekly basis beginning in 2021.

www.joinforeveru.org/classrooms



www.joinforeveru.org/programs

BEST PRACTICES

Below are some powerful ways you can support your child as a ForeverU Parent.

Make Them Feel Important

One of the most powerful things a parent/guardian can do for a child is investing time into their development. Here are some powerful check-in questions all students were asked by their camp counselor each day - feel free to try them out before your child leaves for school, when they return home from school, or over a meal at the dinner table. Consider modifying them or creating your own.

- How are you feeling today?
- What did you learn today?
- What made you smile today?
- What was difficult or challenging about today?
- What is one lesson you learned today?
- What were you most grateful for today?
- What was your favorite moment from today?
- What was your biggest eye-opener today?
- Is there anything going on that I can help you with?

Meet Them Where They're At

A key teaching we have within our programs is called the "power of perspective". When we have a "desire to understand" and begin looking at one's circumstances from a different angle, we set ourselves up in a unique position to provide support. If at any point there is tension or irritability with your child or they express anger and frustration, try to meet them where they're at - be patient, use eye contact, ask questions, and make them feel heard. Students don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care.

Prove Your Love is Unconditional

Lastly, be intentional about ensuring your child feels encouraged, valued, and supported. Try leaving notes for them before they leave for school, complimenting them for doing the little things, or just randomly saying "I love you". Additionally, as we teach our program volunteers often, let them know you are proud of them every chance you get.



34 SIMPLE WAYS TO EMPOWER THE HOUSEHOLD

- #1) Go on a family walk or bike ride on a local trail.
- #2) Be intentional about practicing empathy with your child.
- #3) Pick up the practice of writing daily gratitude statements with your child.
- #4) Have a scheduled family meal at least once a week.
- #5) Write a letter of appreciation to your child.
- #6) Leave sticky notes around the house with inspirational quotes that remind your child of their worth.
- #7) Plan a weekend adventure with the family.
- #8) Ask your child how you can help them or support them at the beginning of each week.
- #9) Have a scheduled end of week check-in with your child.
- #10) Begin the practice of meditation with your child using the Calm or Headspace app.
- #11) Create a family playlist to jam out to in the car.
- #12) Ask your child how you can help them on their self-improvement journey.
- #13) Make time to be present at your child's sporting events or extra-curricular activities.
- #14) Begin the regular habit of celebrating your child's "wins" or personal achievements. Take this a step further by having a designated "Win-Wall" somewhere in the house to display these achievements.
- #15) Cook and prepare a family meal with your child.
- #16) Let your child plan a board game or movie night for the family.
- #17) Write a letter of encouragement or appreciation to your younger self.
- #18) Ask your child about their goals in life and how you can help them get there.
- #19) Using an expo marker, write motivational quotes on the bathroom mirror each week.
- #20) Tell your child that you're proud of them before they go to bed each night.
- #21) Write a letter to your child that you can give to them when they transition into high school or college.
- #22) Find a family hobby that brings everyone together like gardening or starting new house projects.
- #23) Write a letter of forgiveness to yourself to help you on your own journey of self-discovery.
- #24) On an annual basis, create a family photo book that captures the year in review.
- #25) Make your child feel extra special on their birthday.
- #26) Got to a local photographer and have a family photo-shoot. Take the fun up a notch by re-creating old family pictures to compare then versus now.
- #27) Take your family on a hike or to a local park district for a family picnic.
- #28) Teach the importance of saving by creating a fun way for the family to save up for a family vacation.
- #29) Have a family camp out in your backyard and share childhood stories of when you were younger.
- #30) When your child does something wrong, avoid asking "why" questions. Instead, ask "what" or "how" questions. This can prevent your child from becoming defensive and creates an opportunity to work together towards a solution.
- #31) Create a "random act of kindness" challenge for your family to participate in.
- #32) Don't be afraid to apologize to your child if you find yourself in the wrong.
- #33) Make it a priority to schedule a one on one outing at least once per month with each child.
- #34) Make it a goal to hug your child and say "I love you" at least once a day.

We have an on-site counselor and nurse at all retreats and overnight programs.

QUICK FACTS

All program staff and volunteers are required to be working towards or have achieved a degree in social work, psychology, or a related field.

All students who participate in ForeverU programs have access to a mentor and local peer group.

In addition to working with youth, we also educate parents on how to empower the household.

All program volunteers undergo a background check, must be a certified mandated reporter, and undergo training in partnership with Silver Oaks Behavioral Hospital.

We fulfill 100% of financial aid requests.

MENTORING

Mentors have the responsibility of supporting students during their ForeverU experience through our different personal development programs. The intention of integrating mentors into our programs is to provide young adults with the opportunity to "be the person they needed when they were younger". Mentors also help us ensure that the students we serve through our programs feel encouraged, valued, and supported during their time in ForeverU.

Requirements

- At least 21 years of age
- Certified mandated reporter in Illinois
- Passionate about youth development and mental health advocacy
- Must have at least an undergraduate degree in social work, psychology, or a related field

Peer Group Mentor Description

Peer Group Mentors attend a ForeverU one-day retreat where they are assigned no more than (4) students in their local community and have the responsibility of facilitating in-person meetings with the students on the first and third week of each month. Mentors will receive online access to all program materials necessary for leading the program.

Camp Mentor Description

Camp Mentors have the responsibility of leading a group of no more than (6) students at an overnight camp and serve as their designated point person. At the conclusion of the camp, mentors are requested to have a check-in call with their assigned students at least (1) time per month.

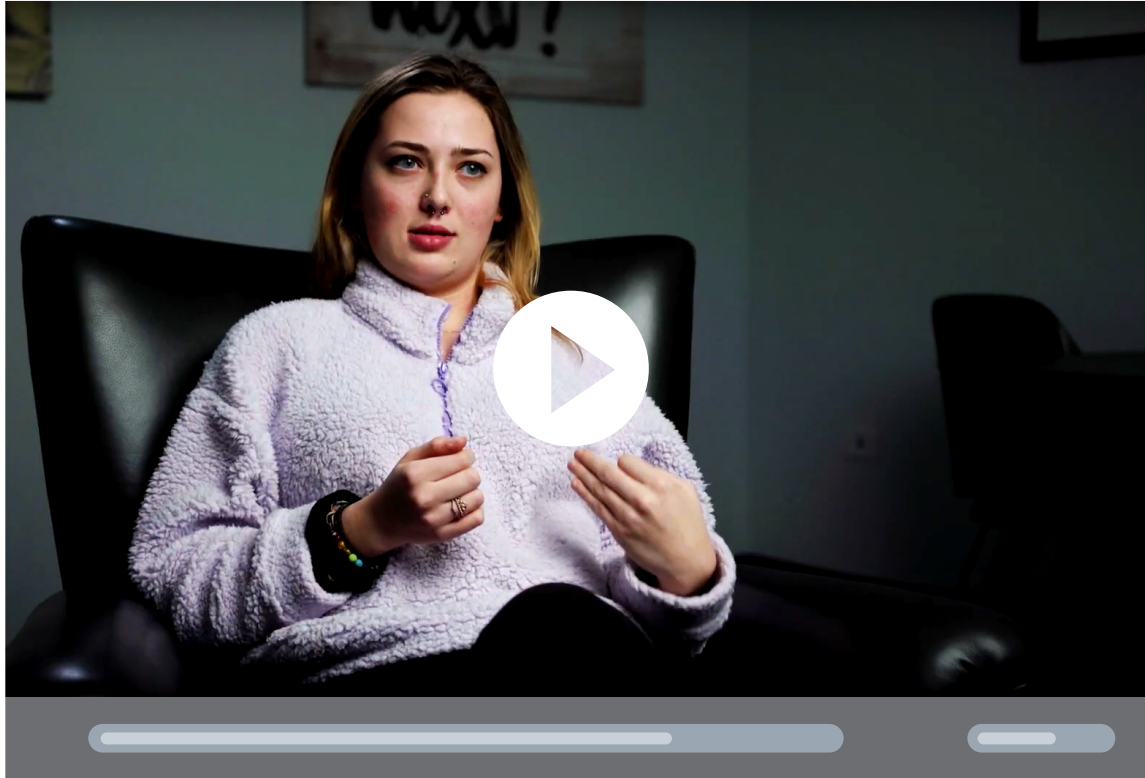
Mentor Training & Certification

Applicants are required to undergo a background check and video interview with our mental health subcommittee. If selected, they will be required to complete our online mentor training program.



www.joinforeveru.org/programs

Watch Online: "This is our why."



Visit our website to watch our latest impact video that captures the testimonies and stories of students positively influenced by our mission.

 www.joinforeveru.org/mission



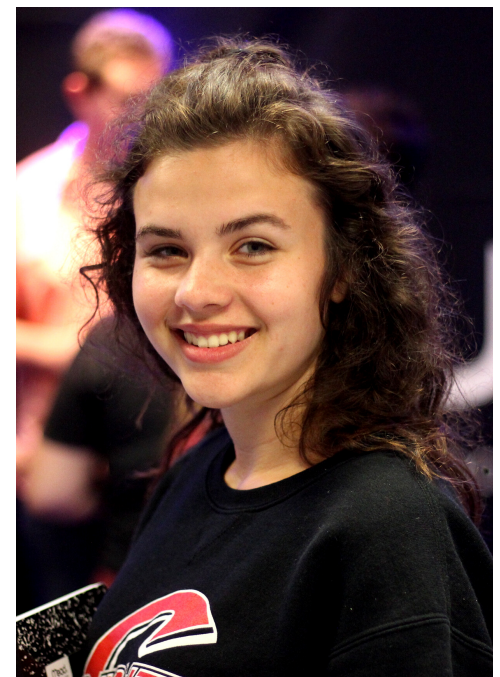
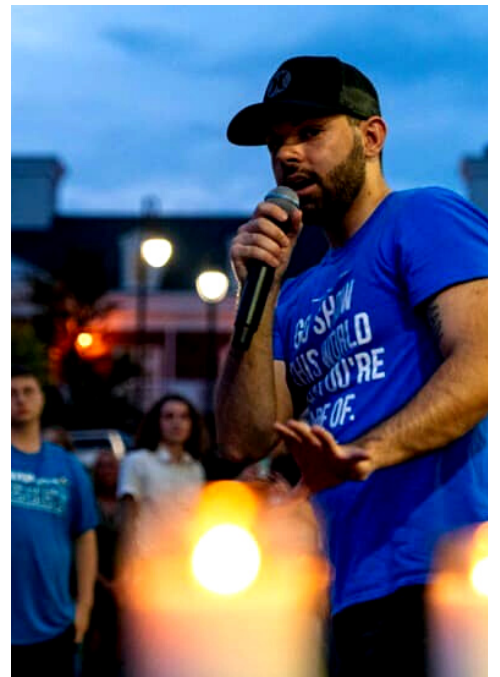
"I'm learning to be content with the person I feel called to be. It is time I stop pretending to be someone I'm not and embrace who I am."



"ForeverU has changed my life for the better and has made me realize that I am here for a reason."



"ForeverU gave me a second chance at life and they have given me a new path to follow in pursuing my life's purpose."



HAVE A QUESTION FOR US?

contact@joinforeveru.org

**THIS
WORLD IS
BETTER
WITH YOU
IN IT**

