

COMMUNITY UPDATE FEBRUARY 2016

Empowering young people experiencing homelessness to shape their futures as self-sufficient and thriving adults.



Brrrrr...It's Cold! Here's the good news - As of a few weeks ago, ALL of the youth we are working with are inside with heat and a roof over their head! Some of this housing is permanent (like an apartment) and some is stable for today (like couch-hopping with a friend). But we no longer have young people we know of, living in their cars!

Access to stable and affordable housing is a challenge for our youth, even if they are working more than one job. We are so

grateful to be partnering with Catholic Charities SHY Program (Supportive Housing for Youth) based out of St. Cloud. SHY offers housing counseling and financial assistance for young people, ages 16 to 24, who are experiencing homelessness, near homelessness, or aging-out of foster care. Several of our young people have qualified for this program, meeting with SHY case managers here at our Elk River location. We celebrate their success and excitement when moving into a place of their own. Thank You SHY!

Since opening last March...

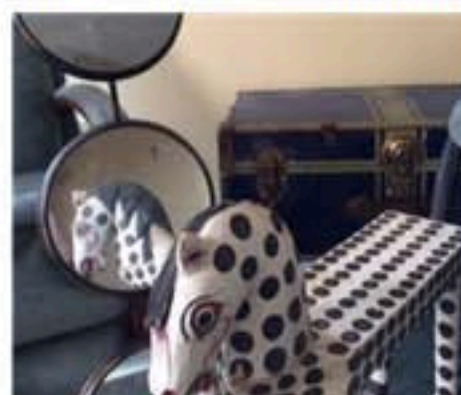
- 55 individual youth assisted
- 475 visits by youth to our center
- 300 meals served at our center
- 850 pounds of food distributed
- 4,015 volunteer hours
- 155 connections of youth to needed service providers

We are EXPANDING!

Open Doors operates weekdays from 2-6pm. We chose the drop-in center model because it allows for the greatest flexibility to meet the schedules of our young people. No appointments necessary—just drop in when your schedule allows. This seems to be working well, as we have logged 475 visits in our first 10 months. The challenge, however, is that our daily count is totally unpredictable - ranging from zero to eleven youth a day. Add in service providers who are meeting with our youth at the center, and space and privacy becomes a critical issue.

Fortunately, we have a wonderful solution! Open Doors is growing to include a suite of rooms right across the hall from our original center. This expansion will provide a youth activity room, a meeting room for youth and our partnering service providers to hold private discussions, a much needed storage room, and an office for our soon to be hired case manager.

Come visit our newly expanded center at our **Open House** March 16th 10am-2pm



Make Change Happen!

Open Doors Fundraising Goal - \$25,000 by June 1st.

First, a huge THANK YOU to all the individuals, organizations, businesses, agencies, and churches who have supported us during our first year! Your support has turned a vision into a reality that is making real change in the lives of local youth. What is our next step at Open Doors? To hire an on-site professional case manager, who will bring added experience and in-depth skills to our youth programming. This will also enable the current directors to expand outreach in the community, connect with additional service providers, and increase awareness of our programs to youth in need.

Our goal is to raise \$25,000 to apply towards this paid part time position. To date, we have \$9,500 in donated funds. Will **you help us reach our goal by June 1st?** Any amount is most appreciated - and please know our youth will benefit greatly by your generosity! Checks (tax-deductible) can be mailed to our office, brought to our Open House on March 16th, or donated through our website on our Give MN link under "Get Involved—Cash Donation." (www.opendoorsforyouth.org)



Come learn more about our youth programs and how **YOU** can make change happen .
Join us at our first anniversary Open House!

A flyer for an Open House event. It features a central graphic with the text "OPEN HOUSE" in large white letters on a dark grey background. Above it is a blue banner with "OPEN DOORS FOR YOUTH". Below the main title are several colored banners with text: a yellow banner celebrating the first year, a green banner with event details (When: March 16, 2016, 10am-2pm; Where: 554 3rd Street #201, Elk River), a blue banner about the new center, a green banner about the fundraiser goal (\$25,000 by June 1st), and a yellow banner inviting friends. At the bottom is a dark grey banner with the Open Doors logo and contact information (763-441-1473, info.opendoorsforyouth@gmail.com, www.OpenDoorsForYouth.org). A vertical credit line on the right reads "deborajacksondesign.com".

Volunteers: Youth Guides in Center

Open Doors youth hours are 2-6pm, Monday thru Friday. We always welcome new volunteers (21+) to work a shift during this time. As a volunteer Youth Guide, you will assist youth in getting immediate needs which are available onsite (food, clothing, hygiene products, etc.).

All volunteers are given training and guidance. A background check is required. For more details, or to download an application form, check our website:

www.opendoorsforyouth.org or call our office (763)441-1473

Volunteer with us

Thank You!



Open Doors is all about partnering together to help youth move forward. It's identifying a need and putting together the resources to resolve that need. It might be complicated - like I need a place to live, or simple - like I need a warm coat. Whatever the need - we will do our best to support the young person's goals.

We don't do this alone. In our first year, we have been very fortunate to form partnerships with our service providers, community groups, churches, schools, businesses, and individuals. In this newsletter we would like to highlight one of these groups - Businesses.

Thank you to the following businesses who have provided financial support or in-kind support this past year!

Pour Wine Bar and Bistro	Cretex Companies	HealthSource of Rogers	CoBank
Elk River McDonalds	Connexus Energy	Great River Energy	DryWall Guy
Pizza Ranch	Shark Industries	Wright-Hennepin Electric Trust	Avalon Salon
Home Depot	Thrivent Financial	Elk River Family Dentistry	AbeTech
Furniture and Things	Elk River Printing	Prime Advertising & Design	Sportech
RJ Magnussen Law		The Bank of Elk River	Geared Up Sports
Central MN Mental Health Center		MN School of Business	
Industrial Molded Rubber Products			

Stay Connected

We would love to hear from you! Better yet, come tour our center and learn more about our programs. Tours can be arranged by calling our center.

Email: info.opendoorsforyouth@gmail.com

Website: www.opendoorsforyouth.org

Office phone: 763-441-1473

Address: 554 3rd Street #201, Elk River, MN 55330

