

Now Open - Thank You Supporters!



After years of planning and research, Open Doors for Youth is now a reality!

In mid-March we quite literally opened our doors to assist young adults who are currently experiencing homelessness or who are precariously housed. Our primary communities are Elk River, Rogers and Zimmerman, but we will certainly assist youth from neighboring communities. Open Doors would not have been possible without the strong support from existing service organizations, community groups, service providers, financial supporters, Independent School District 728, Sherburne County Health & Human Services and our dedicated volunteers. A huge "THANK YOU" to everyone.



554 3rd Street #201, Elk River MN 55330

763-441-1473

Office hours 12-2pm (Mon-Fri)

Youth hours 2-6pm (Mon-Fri)

www.opendoorsforyouth.org



Volunteers

Open Doors is staffed entirely by volunteers - and what a wonderful group we have! People from all walks of life, with differing life experiences but all committed to helping our young adults in their journey forward towards self-sufficiency. We have several different volunteer teams and we work with our volunteers to find the right match for them.

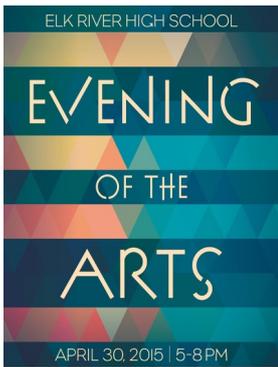
We currently have about 24 trained volunteers on our On-site Team working directly with the youth. Center hours are 2-6pm, and volunteers can work the entire time or a half shift if that works better. We always have 4 volunteers at a time in the center working with youth. The On-site team members attend a training session and receive continuing training updates. You DO NOT need previous youth work experience to volunteer on this team. We are seeking more volunteers to be trained for this team.

We have added two new teams to our volunteer offerings:

- Clothing Closet Hosts - Supervise the Clothing Closet from 2:30-5:00pm. Sort and display donated clothing and assist youth in finding needed items. Does not require the training session.
- Special Opportunities Team - Individuals on this team will organize and run special events at the center. This could include holiday events, employment fairs, art activities and more. Does not require the training session.

Interested in volunteering? GREAT! Please check out our website for details and an application form. You can also call us at the center for more information. We would love to have you as a part of the Open Doors Team!

Upcoming Community Events



Open Doors for Youth has been invited to participate in this year's **Evening of the Arts** at the Elk River High School! We are hosting the silent auction and have some GREAT items for you to bid on! There will be beautiful artwork from area artists, gift certificates for theaters, museums and waterparks, sport items and even a bowling party for 40 guests! Check out our Facebook page for a preview of some items.

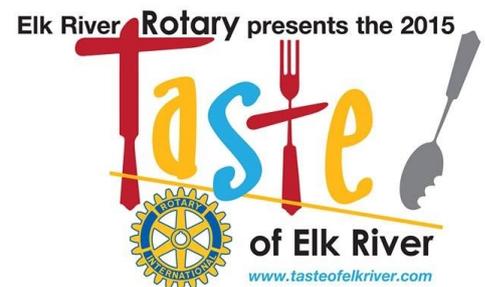
Evening of the Arts continues to be a spectacular annual event that highlights the visual and performing talents of Elk River High School students. We applaud their work and encourage everyone to attend this free community event and bid high for Open Doors!

Thursday, April 30 5-8pm
Elk River High School

The 10th annual **Taste Of Elk River** is coming soon! There will be lots of food, beer, wine and spirits to go along with the fun party hosted by the Elk River Rotary. This year Open Doors has been selected to receive a portion of the proceeds raised at this event! Come, bring a friend and taste delicious fare from local businesses.

Tickets are available from Elk River Rotarians and at Cub Foods, Coborn's, The Bank of Elk River, First National Bank at Elk Park Center, as well as Northbound and Westbound Liquor.

Thursday, May 14 5-9pm
Sherburne County Fairgrounds
Tickets cost \$25 now and \$30 at the door.



Enjoy Tastes and Beverages provided by many local establishments!
Thursday, May 14, 2015 • 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Sherburne County Fairgrounds
12800 Orono Road • Elk River, Minnesota

Service Provider Highlight - Assistance with Medical Care

Beyond offering immediate goods such as food, clothing, and hygiene products to the young people visiting our resource center, we offer connections to other existing services in the community. Over the past few months we have been visiting with area employment services, crisis centers, health agencies and medical clinics to explore ways of partnering. We have been delighted with the willingness of these service providers to join our efforts.

MNsure Counselors. One major area of need is access to medical and mental health care. Some of the youth may have insurance coverage under their parent's plan, but this is usually not the case. We see insurance as a priority item - it opens the door to doctor visits and medications before it becomes an emergency situation. We are very excited about plans to have two of our volunteers trained as Certified Application Counselors for MNsure. That means uninsured young people could get assistance in applying for health insurance on-site at Open Doors! That is huge for us - since the other closest available navigators are in Monticello or St. Cloud and transportation is a significant issue for many youth.

Voucher Program. Another new development in the Medical Care area is a voucher program we have developed with Kemper Drug and Goodrich Pharmacy. If a young person has a prescription that needs to be filled or refilled, or needs over-the-counter medication and cannot afford it, we may be able to help. Working with the pharmacist, we will determine if it is feasible for us to pay the cost of a prescription co-pay, or over-the-counter medication. We believe it is imperative that the youth stay on medications that have been prescribed to avert a crisis situation. Again, insurance plays a role in the affordability of prescribed medications, so we will work with the young person to be sure they are insured.

At Open Doors we understand the importance of a holistic approach in assisting the youth in their future plans. We see the importance of access to medical and mental health services in helping to move out of a survival mode into a period of greater stability. We so appreciate the support of our medical service providers!

Housing Conversations to Begin

Open Doors for Youth is not an overnight shelter. Our mission is to provide a safe place where youth experiencing unstable housing can acquire basic needs and community resource connections. We realize that lack of housing opportunities and emergency overnight beds is a critical issue. There are no local shelter options for our youth. Establishing a shelter is an enormous task - something that is beyond our capacity at this time.

We would like to begin the discussion of what could be done on a smaller, more informal basis. This would include:

- Options for emergency overnight shelter. Churches? Motels? Trained volunteer emergency host homes?
- Ways to support the informal "host home" the young person may already be making use of. If a young person has found a safe family or individual to stay with temporarily, how can we support that situation to extend the stay longer? Food support? Gas support? Transportation assistance? What else?

Join the Conversation. If you would like to be a part of this discussion and begin researching and exploring the possibilities, we would love to hear from you. Please email Cheryl Wold (cherylw.opendoors@gmail.com). We would like to set up an initial meeting in May.

This n' That

We have received our 501(c)3 designation from the IRS!



For the past eight months Sherburne County Area United Way has been the fiscal agent for Open Doors. It has been a great partnership with both of our missions aligning so well. During this time all financial donations to us have been made out to Sherburne County United Way, with 100% of the donation flowing directly to Open Doors. This allowed donors to claim a tax deduction for their contribution. Now, since we have been officially designated as a 501(c)3 non-profit, checks can be made out directly to Open Doors for Youth.

A big THANK YOU to Joy Nadeau and the staff at United Way for all their guidance and help!

Tours of Open Doors for Youth

We love our center and welcome groups and individuals to take a tour! There are only a handful of drop-in resource centers in our state focused specifically on assisting homeless youth. Thankfully, the numbers are starting to rise as communities become aware of this "invisible" issue. Tours can be arranged Monday-Friday in the mornings (9am-1pm), or in the evenings (6:30-8:30). Saturdays are also possible. Call our office to arrange a time.



Stay Connected - We would love to hear from you!

Email: Info.opendoorsforyouth@gmail.com

Office phone: 763-441-1473 (messages answered daily)

Website: www.opendoorsforyouth.org

Note - If you do not wish to receive future newsletters, please email the address above and we will remove you from our mailing list.