



## AveNEWS September 2016

Avenues supports more than 300 youth a year - we can't do it without your help. If you would like to make a direct impact on homeless youth, please click to donate.

 DONATE NOW

### In This Issue

[Tiny House - Big Ideas](#)  
[Volunteer Spotlight](#)  
[Voices for Dreams](#)

### Appreciation This Month



Avenues is looking great after 24 [Boston Scientific](#) volunteers deep cleaned Minneapolis Avenues and its yard! Volunteers painted walls, cleaned common areas, and even planted around the house.

### Dear Friends,

Avenues now helps more than 300 homeless youth every year move from surviving the streets to thriving young adults. On average, it costs us \$65 per day to house and support each Avenues youth. What exactly does that money do? Is that a good deal?

First, those 300-plus youth all receive safe shelter and basic needs, including food. On top of that, youth who live in our programs (excludes the two overnight emergency shelter beds) receive specialized, holistic supports from our team around goal-setting, education and employment, physical and mental health, independent living skills, healthy relationships and long-term housing.

When youth move out of one of our programs, we stick with them and continue providing guidance on an "after-care" basis. Avenues recently named Bryce Jones, a long-time case manager, our After Care and Independent Living Skills Specialist to ensure youth remain stable and continue to move forward.

Avenues' comprehensive supports provide the foundation youth need to move from surviving the streets to thriving young adults. **Considering 76% of our youth last year moved into a stable living arrangement when they moved out of Avenues, \$65 is a really good deal.** Those young people are now more stable, continue to pursue their personal life goals and are on a path to full participation in our community!

Overcoming the many barriers both behind and in front of homeless youth is tough work for the youth. That's why we're committed to providing the supportive services they need to thrive.

If you're interested in learning more about Avenues and how you can help, please contact me anytime. Thank you so much for your support.

Thank you for your support!



Thanks to [Synchrony Financial](#), Avenues met its back pack needs for this fall! Synchrony Financial's St. Paul site provided Avenues with over 30 backpacks full of school supplies and hygiene kits - thank you!



For one night in August, the Lowbrow in Minneapolis donated 10% of its total sales in support of Avenues' host home programs. Host Home Mom even showed up. Thank you to everyone who came to support Avenues and The Lowbrow!

### Virginia McKnight Binger Unsung Hero Awards



*Deb*

Deborah Loon  
Executive Director



## Avenues for Young Families

Did you know that 29% of homeless youth report they are parents, but only 1 in 5 are actually with their children? Housing and age-appropriate services for homeless young families is one of the big gaps in our community.

In response, Avenues is pleased to announce the creation of Avenues for Young Families, a new program starting this fall to help meet this critical need.

Avenues for Young Families will house 12 homeless young families at a time (18 to 24 year old parents and their children) through apartments in the community. Each family will receive support to locate their own apartment and sign a lease, rent subsidies, and holistic services to help them transition to independent living.

Services will include support around the young parent's education and employment goals, child care and education for the children, learning in independent living skills, and health and wellness support for all members of the family.

Clients will be referred to Avenues for Young Families through Hennepin County's "coordinated entry" system. They will be homeless and either in a county family shelter or literally on the streets. For information about referrals, [click here](#).

This new program is funded in-part by a new grant from HUD, as recommended by the Hennepin County Continuum of Care. HUD provides the rent subsidies and part of our program manager's salary. Donations from the community are needed to fully fund this program and match the HUD grant.

Contact [Hailey Alexander](#) to make an in-kind donation to support this program.

Contact [Elaine Woods](#), the Young Families Program Manager, to learn more about this program.

Congratulations to Qamar Saadiq Saoud, former Avenues' staff, for receiving a 2016 Virginia McKnight Binger Unsung Hero Award! Qamar is a tireless advocate for transgender youth in the Twin Cities-especially those who are homeless, as he once was. Now a certified mediator and a part-time student working to become a licensed therapist, Qamar is committed to helping at-risk youth find safe harbor through the GLBT Host Home Program, Avenues for Homeless Youth, Reclaim and several other organizations.

"Qamar spends as much or more time volunteering for his community as he does in paid employment," says his nominator. "Sharing his own experiences to shed light on the lives of LGBTQ youth, homeless communities, people living with HIV and AIDS, and at-risk youth of color."

To read more about Qamar and the Virginia McKnight Binger Unsung Hero Award, [click here](#).

## Mark Your Calendars

### Host Home Training

The next host home training will be on September 17-18. We are in need short and long term host homes for LGBTQ identified youth. If you are interesting in becoming a host or learning more about the host home programs, contact [Ryan Berg](#) or [Rocki Simões](#).

### Voices for Dreams

The third annual concert to benefit Brooklyn Avenues is right around the corner - October 22 to be exact! We are looking for [concert sponsors](#) and [singers for the community choir](#). Choir members will have fun meeting others from local



## Tiny House - Big Ideas

Staff member Kelly Brazil and a group of Avenues youth started a unique project on August 1 - building a tiny house as part of the Soap Factory's 3X5 Emerging Artist Residency Program. Most of the materials used to build the tiny house were donated or found, and local community member donations paid for materials that could not be salvaged.

On August 17, Congressman Keith Ellison met with the ConneQT Collaborative (Avenues, RECLAIM!, The Link) to discuss LGBTQ youth homelessness, the collaborative and what the tiny house project meant to the youth who worked on it.

"It's important because it's something we should consider for housing the homeless. It's a solution," one youth said about the tiny house.

Kelly and the youth are now seeking to sell the house, which was built in pieces that reconstruct. For more information on the tiny house project, contact [Kelly](#).

## Volunteer Spotlight: Owen Marciano

Owen Marciano has been volunteering with Avenues since 2007, a great venture that all began by coincident. Rocki Simões reached out to Owen last minute to lead the white privilege training for our host home programs.



"I was so nervous," Owen admitted. "I've spoken to groups about transphobia and homophobia before, but that was my first white privilege conversation. There was some resistance in the room, but Rocki gave great feedback."

Now Owen has been volunteering for Avenues' host home training for nine years. At the end of every training, Owen asks potential hosts to make a commitment in regards to the training they've received - whether to learn more about white

faith communities and have the opportunity to sing with Robert Robinson and the Cassidy Brothers! Contact [Rachel](#) for more information.

## Avenues Wish List



Wanting to host a donation drive for Avenues at your work place, school or faith community? We make it easy! We can provide donation bins and informational flyers for your customers or employees.

For a list of our current needs, [click here](#). We also have wish lists on [Walmart](#), [Target](#), and [Amazon](#).

## We're Hiring

[On Call Youth Support Specialist](#)

[Send to a Colleague](#)



Avenues for Homeless Youth Administration Offices:

1708 Oak Park Ave. N  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55411  
[rblair@avenuesforyouth.org](mailto:rblair@avenuesforyouth.org)  
612-844-2001

privilege or to talk to others about white privilege. He hopes hosts will keep the training in mind as they host Avenues' youth.

"Regardless of who is in the room, I try to build relationships so we can talk and understand how power works and take down social hierarchies," Owen explained. "My hope is this first conversation will lead to more thoughtful and meaningful conversations between hosts and youth."

Owen believes that teaching the white privilege training has also taught himself a lot of things. "Thank you for giving me this opportunity," he said about volunteering with Avenues. "I've learned a lot about people and myself in undoing the harm of racism."

To learn about volunteering opportunities at Avenues, contact [Craig Freeman](#), Avenues' Community Engagement Manager, at [CFreeman@avenuesforyouth.org](mailto:CFreeman@avenuesforyouth.org) or 612.844.2005



## Voices for Dreams

Benefit Concert for Brooklyn Avenues

The Brooklyn Park faith community is hosting the third annual benefit concert - Voices for Dreams - a night of song, faith and fun all in support of Brooklyn Avenues. We are happy to announce that gospel singer Robert Robinson is returning to headline this year's concert. Robert recently had major surgery, but that's not stopping him from supporting a great cause!

The Cassidy Brothers will also perform, as well as the Brooklyn Park dance ministry and community choir. Interested in joining in the fun? We are looking for singers to join the community choir. The community choir will sing four songs, all with Robert and The Cassidy Brothers, and get to meet others in the Brooklyn Park faith communities. Click here to [learn more](#).

Don't have a singing voice? We are also looking for event sponsors. Learn more by [clicking here](#) or contact [Craig Freeman](#), Avenues' Community Engagement Manager.