



AveNEWS December 2016

Avenues supports more than 300 youth a year - and we can't do it without you! To help homeless youth move from surviving to thriving, please donate.

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Mark Your Calendars



Join Avenues and other volunteers on **Dec. 17** for our annual holiday wrapping party! Many of our gracious donors have donated holiday gifts to our youth, and now it's time to wrap them! We are looking for five to ten additional volunteers to cover wrapping shifts between 9 am and 3 pm.

Dear Friends,

The impact of Avenues for Homeless Youth on our community and its young people continues to grow. Thanks to donors like you, we supported 319 homeless youth in our last fiscal year (ended June 30, 2016) - a 53% increase over the prior year.

Avenues has expanded its programs so we can provide a home to more youth every day. We've also deepened services to give youth specialized education, employment, and mental health supports.

Our holistic support services, on top of the stable home and basic needs Avenues provides, are the foundation for making our youths' dreams possible.

There are many ways in which youth become homeless. All of them are vulnerable and at great risk. But they all have dreams! With your support, they are able to move from surviving the streets to thriving young adults.

This year, Avenues will again provide more than 300 homeless youth the foundation on which they can build their dreams. We could not do this without your support; 56% of our budget comes from you and other caring community members.

I hope you will consider making a donation today. Your continued support will help us provide the holistic services our youth need and enable us to continue expanding to support more youth. Become an Avenues Dream Builder Donor by donating monthly.

Deb

Deborah Loon
Executive Director



Need a New Year's resolution? On **January 21**, [Torque Cycling](#) in Minneapolis is hosting a Pedaling Kindness class and all proceeds are befitting Avenues! What a great way to warm up and exercise during the cold weather. The spin class is \$16 and there's only 25 bikes available, so sign up now! You can sign up by calling Torque (612-326-3933) or online [here](#).

Appreciation This Month



Thank you to the 185 supporters who gave to their max and advocated for Avenues. With your help we exceeded our \$25,000 goal and raised almost \$30,000!



Thank you to everyone who ate at a Nourishing Dreams restaurant in November, and all of the restaurants who generously supported Avenues:



Home Sweet Home

A year and a half ago, Ashley* was struggling to balance her work and school priorities because she was commuting into the cities everyday. Her long drive made it hard to balance two jobs and attend classes at MCTC.

"I couldn't keep up with it," Ashley explained about her work and school obligations.

To ease her long commute, Ashley hoped to obtain different housing. When that fell through, she found herself homeless and stopped attending classes. She was referred to Avenues by a partner service provider and moved into Avenues shortly afterwards.

"At first it was kind of weird, I was quiet," Ashley said about moving into the house. "But I started to get stable when I moved in."

While living at Minneapolis Avenues, Ashley received intensive support services that ultimately helped her maintain her stability. Avenues' nurse connected Ashley with a therapist to improve her mental wellness. She also worked with our Education and Career Specialist to obtain financial aid for college. All the while, Ashley continued working two jobs and saving money.

Ashley and her case manager worked together to find the right housing for her. Through our partner MoveFwd (formally Teens Alone), Ashley got her very own one-bedroom apartment. She moved out and has been living stably in her apartment for two months. She is enrolled in MCTC with the goal of finishing her degree in a year and a half.

"I love my apartment. It's quiet. I don't have to ring to come in, and I can have people over when I want," Ashley said.

Ashley's goal is to complete her degree and become better at managing her finances. She plans on staying in touch with Avenues' staff as she moves forward.

***The name of the youth has been changed to protect their identity.**



Living Word Church generously donated 25 Thanksgiving dinners to Avenues! Our youth and host home families enjoyed them!



Thank you Walmart Foundation for your continued support and confidence in Avenues' programs!



The winter just got a little warmer thanks to Wilson-McShane Corporation! Our youth are enjoying all the different styles of the 350 pairs of socks donated to Avenues! Thank you!



Thank you to our friends at Best Vendors Management who supported Avenues on Give to the Max Day and volunteered at Minneapolis Avenues! Volunteers helped organize our supplies closets and assemble kits for youth moving into apartments.



Consider the Gift of Giving!

In a bind for last minute holiday gifts? Avenues accepts tribute gifts, and this holiday season we'll send your tribute a personalized card. This unique gift is perfect for someone who has everything or for someone who is passionate about ending youth homelessness.

It's very simple - all you have to do is call or email us. We will do the rest -- produce and mail holiday cards to your loved ones letting them know you have made donations in their honor (or we will mail the cards to you for distribution).

Check out the holiday card templates [here](#). Then contact [Hailey Alexander](#) at 612-844-1217. Hailey will collect your payment, card selection and mailing information. Brief personalized messages are welcomed, upon request.



Volunteer Spotlight: Marissa and Lindsey

"We went to a Rainbow Families conference because we were curious about how to start our family," Marissa said.



Thank you to the Minnesota Chapter of Association of Legal Administrators for the care packages!



Thank you Family of God Church for supporting Avenues through your Li'l Abner performance!

Volunteer Needed

Avenues is in need of a volunteer maintenance worker at Minneapolis Avenues. We are looking for help with equipment and building repairs, including minor wall repairs, painting, smoke detector maintenance, and door repair. If this interests you, please contact Craig Freeman at 612-844-2005.

Avenues Wish List

It's cold outside -we've updated our wish lists with our winter clothing needs. [Click here for a printable list](#). Shop locally and deliver yourself to Avenues ([email ahead](#)). Or shop online at [Amazon](#), [Target](#) and [Walmart](#).

Did you know that Avenues makes in-kind donation drives easy? We now supply businesses, churches and organizations with donation bins and marketing support. Our staff will even pick up and drop off everything you need.

We're Hiring

It was at the conference that Marissa and Lindsey met Rocki, Avenues GLBT Host Home Program Manager. After talking to Rocki about the program, Marissa said she and Lindsey were "bitten by the bug."

"We had resources we could share and space," Lindsey explained.

Now six years after that fateful day, Marissa and Lindsey have hosted several youth as part of the GLBT Host Home Program. The couple even stepped up to host a youth in Avenues' ConneQT Host Home Program.

Throughout their years hosting, they've put in countless hours of volunteering, love and time in Avenues and the youth they host. They celebrate the small things youth accomplish, including youth setting up their own appointments, late night chats and watching youth build their confidence. "The most important thing we can give is time," Marissa said.

"I don't know what being a parent feels like, but I like to think that through my relationships with the youth, I know what it feels like to love someone like family," Marissa said.

Lindsey and Marissa often encourage their neighbors and friends to consider hosting. For those who may be considering it, they recommend that you "take everything in stride and celebrate the small things."

To learn about Avenues' host home programs, contact [Rocki](#) or [Ryan](#), or watch our host home video.



Avenues' Host Homes

Announcing New Board Members

Avenues is proud to announce two new members of its Board of Directors, Sara Blood and Corey Falls.

On Call Youth Support
Specialist

Youth Counselor Team Lead

Maintenance Technician

 Send to a Colleague



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Sara Blood brings 20 years of public relations and journalism experience to the Avenues Board. She is a founder of the public relations department at Gage, which provides creative, media relations, social media and event planning services within a full-service marketing agency.

Blood has been a longtime volunteer at Avenues, most recently serving on the Action Council for the Minneapolis & Suburban Host Home Programs. Gage provided pro bono creative design work for Avenues' annual Building on Dreams fundraising breakfast earlier this year.



Corey Falls has been involved in helping the nonprofit community over the past 20 years through his work in the printing/publishing industry and as a business consultant and technology advisor. He previously served on the board of Prairie Oaks Institute and has done volunteer work for the

Human Rights Campaign and RECLAIM. Falls' company, MyTech, selected Avenues for a pro bono technology makeover this year. In his spare time, Falls enjoys music, cooking, theater and all the adventures life has to offer.

Thank you for your commitment, Corey and Sara!