



AVENUES
FOR HOMELESS YOUTH

AveNEWS January 2017

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



Please join us at the 3rd Annual Mardi Gras Gala presented by the [Victor Donato Memorial Foundation](#)! The casino-themed fundraiser is on February 3 at

Dear Friends:

Two years ago today (January 31, 2015), we hosted the grand opening celebration of Brooklyn Avenues, our 12-bed shelter for homeless youth located in Brooklyn Park. With continued support from the community, this "safe house" has already touched the lives of almost 200 youth from the northwest suburbs of Hennepin County. We'll provide a full report to you on the work and youth of Brooklyn Avenues in our February issue.

Meanwhile, in this issue we celebrate another new program launch -- Avenues for Young Families. While there was no ground to be broken or grand opening to hold, this new program is no less important. It will help 12 homeless young families at a time break the cycle of poverty and homelessness through housing and holistic support services for the whole family.

Avenues is able to continue its work to meet the needs of homeless youth and the community because of your support and because you care. Thank you.

Deb

Deborah Loon
Executive Director



Leopold's Mississippi Gardens in Brooklyn Park. To learn more about the event and purchase tickets, click [here](#). Part of proceeds benefit Brooklyn Avenues!



Ready to wear red, have a great night out and support Avenues? The 3rd Annual RED Affair is on Feb. 4! Your ticket includes hors d'oeuvres by Fogo de Chão, performances by Sounds of Blackness and Hookers & Blow, raffle, live and silent auctions, and a FotoBomb photo booth! [Buy your tickets here](#). Thank you [Jungle Red Salon Spa & Gallery](#) for over ten years of support!



Mark your calendar and plan to attend Avenues' 4th annual spring breakfast on May 2, 2017! To learn about hosting a table or [sponsorship opportunities](#), contact [Julia O'Brien](#), Avenues' Development Director.

Appreciation This Month



Thank you [Inbound BrewCo](#) for hosting Pillows and Beer, a fundraising concert series that supported Avenues, Hope Street and The Link!

Avenues is Housing its First Young Families

Avenues for Young Families launched this month to provide housing and supportive services to 12 homeless young parents and their children. Already, four young families staying in Hennepin County family shelters have been referred to the program and are on their way to being housed.

More than a third of homeless young people are parents, but most are not able to be with their children due to their homelessness and other issues. We know that, when young families can be together, housed and supported, we can break the cycle of inter-generational poverty and homelessness.

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

Our team will provide support around education and career goals, independent living skills, and health and wellness, and child care and early childhood development.

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.

Elaine Woods, Program Manager, is working with the young parents on multiple goals at a time. "We connected the first client, a young father with two children, with employment services," Woods said. "While waiting on approval of his apartment application, he has been accepted into a ten week customer service training program."

Woods also connected the young father with a school where he can achieve his dream of gaining his GED, while his children access on-site child care services.

"Our goal is to help these young parents achieve their goals and move toward independent living," Woods said. "Having a place to call home for their children is the first step, but it's a big one. There were tears when our first two families toured the apartments they'll be moving into by February 1."

Youth Homelessness in MN

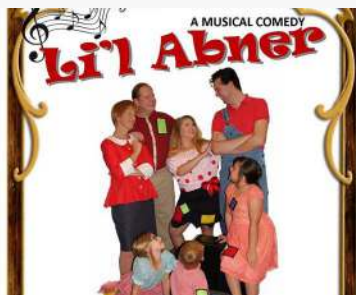


A big thank you to the [Human Rights Campaign](#) and [United Way Arise Project](#) volunteers who deep cleaned and cooked at Brooklyn Avenues and Minneapolis Avenues on Martin Luther King Day!



During December, [Southwest High School](#) collected in-kind donations of water bottles, backpacks, winter gear and over \$2,000 for Avenues! On the last day of the semester - Blast Day - Avenues' program managers Rocki Simões and Ryan Berg, spent the day speaking to classes about youth homelessness and racial equity issues.

Thanks to the Southwest High School Student Council and Connie Overhue for your hard work raising awareness among your student body and supporting Avenues!



Thank you [Family of God Lutheran Church](#) (Brooklyn Park) for supporting Brooklyn Avenues through your "Li'l Abner" performances!

2015 Wilder Research Results

Since 1991, Wilder Research has been gathering data on homelessness in Minnesota. Every three years, Wilder conducts a state-wide study to count the number of people experiencing homelessness, and to gather data on their experiences. The full report of the 2015 study was released in November, and reported that 6,000 youth in Minnesota experience homelessness every night.

The increase (up 2,000 from the 2012 study) is due in part to expanding the age range of youth to 24, lining up with the Minnesota Homeless Youth Act. According to the study, youth make up 16% of Minnesota's homeless population and are the most likely age group to be homeless. Other highlights -- 24% of homeless youth reported being turned away from a shelter due to no bed availability and 57% of homeless youth reported having a serious mental health challenge.

While homelessness overall in Minnesota has decreased since the 2012 study, there is still a very large gap in age-appropriate supports and housing for Minnesota's homeless youth. To read the full study or to learn more about Wilder Research, go to Wilder's website [here](#).



#WILDforAVENUES

Avenues was the Minnesota Wild's Charity of the Month for January. We were profiled on the Wild's website, printed program and radio spots for the whole month and given a special feature at the January 12 Wild game. Staff and Board members had a blast connecting with fans at the game with a photo booth and conversation. Avenues turned out to be the Wild's lucky charm, as they won 7-1. A big thank you to the Minnesota Wild and Innovative Office Solutions for making Avenues your January Charity of the Month!



[Torque Cycling](#) supported Avenues through January by collecting in-kind donations and donating proceeds from its "Pedaling for Kindness" ride to Avenues. Thank you, Torque Cycling and customers!



Shout out to our wonderful Board members, Jenny Javitch and Julio Acosta, for volunteering with Avenues and connecting with fans at the Wild Charity of the Month game on January 12!

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 (please [email ahead](#)). Or shop online at [Amazon](#), [Target](#) and [Walmart](#).

Avenues makes in-kind donation drives easy! If your organization wants to hold a drive, we will supply donation bins and marketing materials. Our staff can even drop off and pick up, if needed.

We're Hiring

[On Call Youth Support Specialist](#)

[Youth Counselor Team Lead](#)

Volunteer Spotlight: Ron Engh



Eight years ago, Ron Engh explored becoming a host home or a foster parent. He went through both trainings and, although he ended up becoming a foster parent, he began volunteering with Avenues in other ways.

"Avenues gives me a hands-on experience," Ron said about why he likes volunteering at Avenues.

Ron has helped Avenues with numerous projects over the years, including photographing events, organizing the clothing closet and building gardening boxes.

Ron frequently checks to see what Avenues' donation needs are. He said that talking to staff and looking at Avenues' wishlist have been helpful in understanding what's really needed. Ron's latest donations included heavy-duty winter gloves and sturdy can openers.

When he's out shopping, Ron says, "I keep resources in mind to bring to charities who need them."

To learn about volunteering opportunities, contact [Craig Freeman](#), Community Engagement Manager.



Thank You, Holiday Elves!

 [Send to a Colleague](#)



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Thanks to many generous donors and volunteers, every single young person who is engaged with Avenues (and some of their children) received holiday gifts this year!

Volunteers braved the roads after the heaviest snowfall of 2016 to wrap over 600 gifts. Brookdale Covenant Church donated storage and wrapping space to hold all of the presents this year.

On behalf of everyone at Avenues, thank you for your generosity to our youth.