



## Host Home Program Values

Avenues for Homeless Youth manages three separate host home programs: the GLBT Host Home Program, which provides transitional, longer-term housing for youth who identify as LGBTQ, the ConneQT Host Home Program, which provides more emergency-based and shorter-term housing for LGBTQ youth, and the Minneapolis & Suburban Host Home Program, which provides housing for homeless youth from the metro area and suburbs of Hennepin County regardless of their LGBTQ identification. All of these programs have a commitment to being informed by a philosophy of solidarity, not charity; we believe that communities can thrive when we share our resources from the perspective of 'us and us' and not 'us and them'.

There are many unknowns when it comes to hosting and building community with young people. It requires trust, hope, vulnerability, commitment, communication, healthy boundaries, and flexibility.

### **Values and Understandings of our HHPs:**

- We seek to recognize and challenge systems of power that perpetuate barriers and injustice in young people's lives (such as racism and classism), and we are aware that not all youth get the same results through the same hard work under these systems
- We approach youth work through a lens of social justice and youth empowerment
- We value diversity in all its forms
- We believe in supporting youth regardless of their racial or ethnic identity, religious affiliations, or lack thereof, gender identity or sexual orientation
- We acknowledge that youth's sexual and gender identity may change throughout their adolescence; a youth who identifies as straight or a specific gender when they are referred into the program may begin to question their sexual orientation or gender identity at any time
- We believe in trauma-informed and harm reduction strategies that affirm youths' strengths and their own agency
- We believe in leading through example and fostering shared leadership
- We understand that all youth will sometimes make choices we don't agree with, and we acknowledge the youth's right to make those choices for themselves
- We understand that choices youth make about sexual activity or other behaviors might be different from those we might wish or expect for our own children and we do not fill a parental role for the youth in the program
- We believe that youth benefit from living with adult allies who are aware of the inherent power dynamics of the host home model and strive to minimize misuse of power