



AveNEWS February 2019



6,000 youth in Minnesota won't have a stable home tonight. Together we can help.

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Check Out Our New Events Calendar For Upcoming Events



Every third Thursday of the month Avenues is hosting an open house and conversation at both shelters. Anyone is invited to come - we promise you'll leave feeling inspired and learn about youth

Dear Friends:

Who or what inspires you? Youth have been inspiring us at Avenues for 25 years. Every day, the youth we support in our programs bring their wisdom, their resilience, and their passion to recovering from the trauma they have experienced and moving toward their future. In recent issues of AveNEWS we've shared stories of youth who dream of going to college, starting their own business, buying their mom a home. We love partnering with youth to achieve those dreams.

We're also inspired by young people who support youth experiencing homelessness. Our founder was only 19 years-old when she started Avenues. In this issue you'll meet Shrey, an amazing young person who makes it possible for every youth at Avenues to be welcomed with new towels. All young people can accomplish amazing things when they have the support they need.

I hope you'll join us at our Building on Dreams breakfast on May 7, where we will celebrate our 25th anniversary. I guarantee you'll leave inspired!

Katherine

Katherine Meerse, Ph.D.
Executive Director

homelessness. This is not a fundraiser but an opportunity to learn more about our work and to see what your support has gone to. [More information here.](#)



Neither traditional gala, nor a show supporting a cause, The Red Affair is a soirée with a purpose. Join us for a night of live auction, fabulous raffle prizes, hors d'oeuvres and cocktails, dancing and music by member of Grammy award-winning The Sounds of Blackness. [More information and tickets available here.](#)

What: The Red Affair
Where: St. Mary's University Center
When: April 27, 6:30 p.m. - 12:00 a.m.



Join us on March 3 for the Caritas' Voice of the People concert, benefiting Brooklyn Avenues. Caritas' audiences are treated to a concert of delightful a cappella choral music performed by a mixed group of experienced singers. Sacred and secular, traditional, contemporary and culturally diverse, we have something for everyone! The musical selections are performed by men and women with a passion for singing coupled with a desire to make a difference in the world.

What: Benefit Concert
Where: Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 7217 West Broadway Ave. Brooklyn Park, 55428
When: March 3, 2019, 3:00-5:00 p.m.

[Visit Caritas's website for more information.](#)



Sparking Change One Towel At A Time

When Shrey was three years old, he took a tour at Minneapolis Avenues with his mother, Seema, who was then on Avenues' board of directors. He met a few of the youth and played basketball with them. He learned about what the young people were experiencing, and what was needed to make a place like Avenues run. That year for his birthday, he asked for towels instead of birthday presents. He donated 15 towels to Avenues youth.

Now Shrey is 15 years old and still collecting towels for his birthday. He organized a drive, getting his school and local businesses involved, and collected over 1,900 towels.

Thanks to Shrey, Avenues hasn't had to buy or collect towels in years. Every youth at Avenues is given two new towels the day they enter the program, a simple but welcoming gesture.

Shrey's generosity does so much more than collect towels - he's inspired others to take action. Avenues received dental kits from Savage's Service Day Saturday (an event created by Shrey). Shrey's little sister, Meena, now holds a body wash donation drive too. Her latest drive collected over 200 bottles of body wash, covering a whole year of Avenues' needs.

Avenues has always believed that young people are inspiring and capable of anything they set their mind to. Thank you Shrey for inspiring our team and community one towel at a time!

In February Shrey was featured in City Pages' People Issue, an addition that celebrates Minnesotans that are making a difference. [Read the article here.](#)

We're Hiring!

To see our positions,
click here.

Gratitude This Month



Youth at Minneapolis Avenues were surprised with Valentine's Day gifts from MAJ Women for Justice Section. Thanks for sharing the love!

Thank you Prince of Peace Lutheran Church for continually collecting donations for Brooklyn Avenues. Your support allows us to welcome every youth to the program with all their needs. We're grateful for our partnership!

Thank you to our newest volunteers, Kim Dudgeon, Sarah Bright and Myron Goodman, for making an impact at Avenues!



Thank you Brooklyn Park Rotary for benefiting Brooklyn Avenues at the New Game Dinner. At the event, community members raised money to address suburban poverty. Their fund a need supported Avenues and our partners CEAP and Hope for Youth.



Brooklyn Avenues Turns Four

This month marks Brooklyn Avenues fourth anniversary. Donnell Bratton, the Assistant Director of Site Based Program, reflects below on Brooklyn Avenues and its impact.

What are trends young people at Brooklyn Avenues are experiencing?

The two biggest issues I've seen with youth at Brooklyn Avenues are family reunification and mental health. A lot, I mean a lot, of young people are coming in with mental and emotional issues going on. We're dealing with trauma and homelessness, which is in itself traumatic.

One of the trends I've seen is that families aren't communicating and children are leaving. Avenues ends up with these young people and has to circle back to the family to if we can some restorative and family reunification.

What kinds of barriers can these trends cause?

One day I asked a young man at Brooklyn Avenues why he wasn't doing his chores. I asked him if he needed help, and he literally didn't know to put water in the bucket to mop. He didn't know how to mop.

You get your independent living skills and emotional support from your family and community. But some of these young people have not had that opportunity because they had to survive their whole life or the last few years. When young people haven't had sound structure and don't know how to work, how can they be in an atmosphere that will allow for them to have a livable wage?

What has stood out to you over Brooklyn Avenues four years?

When you have a community that's invested in its young people, it's no longer a cliché when you say it takes a village to raise a child. The northwest suburbs live up to that saying for Brooklyn Avenues.

I have never seen this commitment from community - especially the faith community. You can't ask for a better community for Avenues to be in. Our community has provided graduation parties these last four years, bringing donations by every week, birthday celebrations - it's amazing. It's straight up wonderful.

Anything else you'd like to add?

Happy anniversary, Brooklyn Avenues. I am so proud, and count it as an honor and privilege to be able to serve the community from the beginning.



Avenues for Homeless Youth

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Staff with Joe Deschler at Nickelodeon Universe.

Nickelodeon Universe Field Trip

Youth had a fun trip to Mall of America this month! Joe Deschler, a generous supporter, donated Nickelodeon Universe unlimited ride passes to youth in all our programs. Young people shopped, road rides, and just enjoyed themselves for an afternoon.

Thank you Joe for the fun day!



Register For Building On Dreams, Celebrating Avenues 25th Anniversary

For twenty-five years Avenues has been walking alongside youth experiencing homelessness. At this year's Building on Dreams Breakfast, you'll hear powerful stories from our past and present, including Avenues founder Michelle Basham and youth from the early years of our operations.

By attending Building on Dreams, you show up for young people experiencing homelessness and partner with us in walking alongside them. Please join us on May 7, 2018 from 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. The event will be held at Nicollet Island Pavilion, 40 Power St, Minneapolis, MN.

[Learn more about Building on Dreams here.](#)

[Register for Building on Dreams](#)

