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Youth matter. At Avenues for Youth (Avenues), we keep young people at the center of everything we do. Youth are the drivers of their journeys, and their experience guides our programs and practices. When we affirm a young person's intrinsic value, it supports them in pursuing their dreams.

This last year, anti-trans legislation swept the country and attacked the core identity of many youth. ConneQT, our community-based host home program for LGBTQI+ youth, saw an influx of Trans youth coming to Minnesota to seek out refuge. With your support, we were able to show up for these young people in a way that **demonstrates** we are proud of who they are authentically. Young people in the ConneQT program found jobs, built community, and moved into their own apartments. For the third year in a row 100% of ConneQT youth exited the program to safe and stable housing!

We know that Black lives matter. This is not just a slogan for Avenues, but a statement of truth. Nearly 86% of the youth we partner with identify as Black, Indigenous, and/or People of Color (BIPOC). It matters that young people understand the inequitable conditions that create extra barriers for BIPOC youth. It's important that we stand in solidarity with youth and are here to identify resources and opportunities as they journey to achieve their dreams.

Our staff also matter. They care deeply about the youth and walk alongside them on their journeys to housing. They are critical to the success of Avenues. This year we are proud to implement another pay-equity increase for all direct services staff as a demonstration of their value.

And you matter. Your financial support, your helping hands, your advocacy, your labor, and your deep care and compassion matter. You care about young people, and you care about your community. Without you, nothing we do is possible. We honor and appreciate your contributions.

As Avenues positions itself for growth in 2024 and beyond, **we are rooted in affirming that every young person is valuable.** We are honored to be on this journey with you as we endeavor to end youth homelessness one young person at a time.

Sincerely,

Katherine Meerse, Ph.D.

Executive Director

P.S. I'd love to show you around Avenues. If you'd like a tour, please send me an email at kmeerse@avenuesforyouth.org

WHO WE ARE



Avenues partners with youth experiencing homelessness in Minnesota. Whether youth need a place to stay for one night or a year and a half, we're here for youth in this part of their journey. Avenues keeps youth at the center of our work by using a trauma-informed approach and emphasizing social justice.





Values: Equity, community, respect and dignity, trust, liberation, and anti-oppression.

YOUTH ARE RESILIENT, INSPIRING, AND DRIVERS OF THEIR OWN JOURNEY.

ALL YOUTH RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING SUPPORTS

- Basic needs including housing, food, hygiene items, and more.
- Intensive, individualized, one-on-one support (also known as case management).
- Health and wellness support including on-site mental health therapy, as well as physician and nursing care.
- Youth empowerment and engagement activities.







OUR PROGRAMS

	MINNEAPOLIS AVENUES	BRQOKLYN AVENUES	CONNEQT	YOUNG FAMILIES
PROGRAM MODEL	Shelter Addresses immediate and crisis needs by providing a safe place to stay, nutritious meals, clothing, and more Transitional Housing Partners with youth to address long-term goals related to stable housing, career, education, and wellness.		Host Home Community- based, scattered site support in volunteer homes for youth who identify LGBTQI+	Rapid Rehousing Scattered site housing in apartments for young parents and their children
LENGTH OF STAY	Shelter up to 30 days Transitional Housing up to 18 months.		Up to a year and sometimes longer as needed.	Up to a year and sometimes longer as needed.
AGES OF YOUTH	18-24	16-21	16-24	18-24
# OF YOUTH HOUSED AT A TIME	21	12	10	12 families, expanding to 24
OPERATING SINCE	1994	2014	1997	2017



OUR IMPACT

AVENUES SUPPORTED 28LI YOUTH EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

OUTCOMES

Each year, Avenues tracks youth exits to safe and stable housing across programs. In FY23, Avenues began measuring youth progress in three additional areas – skills, well-being, and connections. The results below show how youth are progressing in their journeys:



78%

of youth exited to Safe and Stable Housing



92%

of youth improved in **Well-Being**



92%

of youth gained **Life Skills and Wellness Skills**

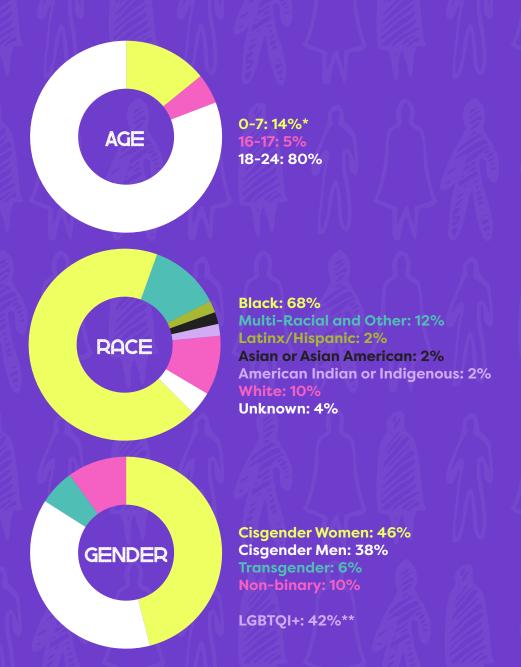


91%

of youth improved
Connections with Caring Adults and the Community

DEMOGRAPHICS

Avenues recognizes that certain young people are overrepresented among those facing homelessness due to systems of oppression that include racism, homophobia, and transphobia. Without addressing these systems, homelessness will persist. Of youth that Avenues supports, 86% identify as BIPOC, and 42%** identify as LGBTQI+. Avenues provided support, housing, and resources to youth from Hennepin County and the Twin Cities Metro Area.



^{*}Children of young parents of the Young Families program.
**An estimated 42% of youth identified as LGBTQI+. It is
not required that youth disclose this information.



ORGANIZATIONAL UPDATES

Our community matters. It's why we advocated alongside the Youth Services Network at the state capitol to secure record funding for the Homeless Youth Act. It's why we take input and adapt our programs to meet young people's ever-evolving needs. Last year, we made organizational improvements that reflect the value of youth, staff, and our community.

YOUNG FAMILIES IS GROWING

Each year in Minnesota, over 13,300 youth experience homelessness. It's estimated that 35% of these youth are parents themselves. Avenues' Young Families program uses apartment-based housing to provide safe, affordable, and supportive homes for young parents, ages 18 to 24, and their children. With our support, young families transition out of homelessness, achieve housing stability, and stay united with their children.

Because the need is still increasing, we are growing the Young Families program's capacity from 12 to 24 families at a time!

AGE CHANGE AT MINNEAPOLIS AVENUES

In 2022, we changed the age range at the Minneapolis Avenues location from 16 to 21, to 18 to 24 due to the lack of shelter specifically designed for young adults. On any given night in Hennepin County, there are at least 80 people between the ages of 18 to 24 who are staying in adult shelters. Adult shelters are an important part of our overall homeless response system, but they are not the best option for youth. Adult shelters are often overnight only, leaving youth on the streets during the day, and can be dangerous for youth.

In changing the age range at Minneapolis Avenues, we recognize the specific needs of youth in their early years of adulthood and provide the space and resources needed to meet their goals for their future.

PAY EQUITY INCREASE

Over the past three years, Avenues has focused on wage equity. Last year, we implemented another pay increase to reflect this value. Our three-year plan for wage increases honors Avenues' core value of equity and helps us to stay competitive in a tight labor market. As increased wages contribute to staff retention, we're seeing greater stability within programs, providing greater stability for youth.

NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

Avenues for Youth has launched a new strategic plan that was created by Avenues' leadership, managers, and the Board of Directors. Knowing there remains a significant unmet need in our community, Avenues for Youth will focus on sustainable growth, while keeping social justice at the center of our work. Our strategic goals are:



Grow and support programs grounded in youth voice and data.



Focus on staff well-being and development to advance equity and support youth.



Foster, design, and construct peoplecentered spaces that are trauma-informed and energy efficient.



Increase resources and capacity to meet the needs of youth.

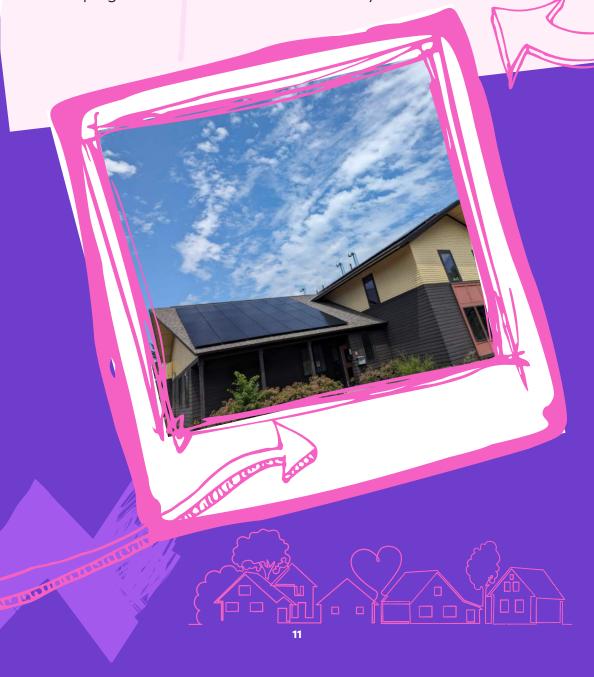


Intentionally incorporate values - equity, community, respect + dignity, trust, liberation, anti-oppression- into daily work and processes.

SOLAR ENERGY

We know that a healthy planet matters for the future of youth and our community, so we've gone solar at Brooklyn Avenues! In the first six months since installing solar panels, we saved 36,427 lbs. of CO2 Emissions, which is equivalent to 275 trees planted!

Solar energy decreases our carbon footprint, offers climate education for the community, supports green jobs, provides reliable, clean energy, and lessens climate injustices. Because of going solar, we're also saving on our monthly utility bills, which will be reinvested in advancing our mission and supporting the community. We are grateful to Hammond Climate Solutions Foundation's Solar Moonshot program, The Midwest Renewable Energy Association, TruNorth Solar, Xcel Energy Minnesota, and Avenues' advocate Ted Redmond for helping to make our solar dream a reality.



VOUTH VOICES

"I'm motivated now, now I am on grind mode. I only see myself trying to elevate and be a better person for myself."

-DAVIANA, YOUNG PARENT AND FORMER YOUTH OF THE YOUNG FAMILIES PROGRAM

"I never thought I'd be in this place. But I wake up every day and realize, okay, I'm closer to what I want. I have ten little siblings to look after. I have to be a leader for them. I got to show them that there's a brighter meaning."

-MESSIAH, FORMER YOUTH OF BROOKLYN AVENUES

"Today I have an appointment with a therapist. I'm probably going to get a therapist and eventually a psychiatrist. [My Youth Advocate has] been helping me get doctor's appointment, and housing."

-RAVEN, FORMER YOUTH OF BROOKLYN AVENUES







"My
dream is to
be a great mother to
my two children, have my
dream job of a nurse, get my
credit at a good score, and have
a savings account for me. Also,
that my two children live life."

-ALEXIS, YOUNG PARENT AND FORMER
YOUTH OF THE YOUNG FAMILIES

DREAM MAKER SOCIETY

Avenues for Youth partners with youth experiencing homelessness to achieve their dreams. Our Dream Maker Society provides a lasting impact on the lives of youth and lays a financial foundation that ensures our work with youth continues. Dream Makers are a group of individuals who commit to give \$2,000 or more over two years, or just \$84 a month.



COMMUNITY PARTNERS MATTER

Avenues for Youth relies on volunteers and community support to keep the houses looking great, stock the closets with hygiene products and welcome baskets, and spread awareness of our work. Over the last year, Avenues was fortunate enough to receive support from many companies, congregations, and civic organizations.





All support is deeply appreciated, and we would like to spotlight a few of many notable partner activities:

BOKSER HOME - because comfort matters

Bokser Home has become an annual partner to Avenues for Youth, providing all programs with bedding needs. Started and located right in Minneapolis, this premium bedding company centers itself on quality, value, and responsible sourcing. It is a company that cares about its community and is deeply invested in making sure every youth at Avenues sleeps warmly and soundly.

Each quarter, Bokser supplies the houses with all of our bedding needs. The duvets, covers, sheets, pillows, and towels are top quality. All youth exiting Avenues get to take these items with them to ensure they rest comfortably.



L'OREAL- because dignity matters

This famous beauty brand is a new supporter that brought volunteers and organizational style to Avenues' storage closets. Over the course of several hours the twenty-six volunteers cleaned, inventoried, reorganized and re-stocked the health and hygiene closets. L'Oreal created a dignified space for youth to access any needed resources. Additionally, L'Oreal made a significant gift to help with the general operations of the organization.

PAR SYSTEMS- because Pride matters

This local company is another first-time supporter within a family of companies (the Pohlad Companies) that have long supported Avenues. During June's Pride month, PAR Systems generously hosted Avenues on their campus for a day of activities and festivities. Their team created hundreds of Pride "goody-bags" that Avenues distributed to youth during the Twin Cities Pride festival. Also, ConneQT Program Manager, Ryan Berg, led a company-wide conversation about LGBTQI+ youth experiencing homelessness.



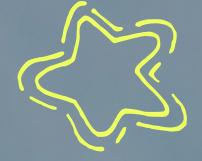
TARGET- because a warm welcome matters

Again, this year, Target teams supported Avenues in a variety of ways. Target of North St. Paul organized a significant donation drive that collected health and hygiene items, while the Target Volunteer Council hosted an on-campus event with over 50 volunteers who built welcome baskets for youth entering Avenues programs. Target also made a generous contribution to Avenues through Target Circle!



HOLY NATIVITY AND PRINCE OF PEACE - because celebration matters Local congregations sponsored birthday celebrations for all youth of the shelter and transitional living programs. Since January 2023, Avenues has been able to provide cakes, decorations, birthday cards, and gifts to ensure that every young person is celebrated on their special day!





"I've been working with staff about getting jobs, finding housing, and trying to move forward from this situation that I'm in... My dream job though is to travel to different hotel resorts around the world and give them reviews. I would love that."

TIA, FORMER YOUTH OF AVENUES



BUILING ON DREAMS

In 2023 we celebrated the 10th anniversary of Building on Dreams at Glass House, engaging over 300 people. The event brought together local leaders, community partners, board members, volunteers, and donors to celebrate and raise critical funds for Avenues for Youth. Thank you to our emcee, Shayla Reaves, our keynote speaker, Princess Titus, and Known MPLS for making the day extra special!

THANK YOU TO OUR 2023 BUILDING ON DREAMS SPONSORS

PRESENTING

Luther Brookdale Mazda Luther Brookdale Mitsibushi

SUPPORTER

Alerus

ADVOCATE

Allina Health

PARTNERS

Anderson Realty

Bokser Home
Comcast Corporation
Connexus Credit Union
EY
Faegre Drinker
Main Street America Insurance
Right at Home
Sunrise Banks
Timberland Partners

FRIENDS

Giant Flowers by Di Mahoney, Ulrich, Christiansen & Russ Metro Sales Inc. Mytech Partners Prince of Peace Lutheran Church Remax Results No Place Like Home Riverbridge Schatz Real Estate Group Topline Financial Credit Union

2023 HOST COMMITTEE

Sam Blackwell
Corey Falls
Rachelle Haroldson
Molly Leutz
Missi Odden
Vicki Roscoe Erickson
Faith Ross
Donna Williams
Chuck Tombarge



LEADERSHIP

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John Saunders

Jenna Shermoen

Andy Sybilrud





STAFF LEADERSHIP

Katherine Meerse, Ph. D. - Executive Director

Zayed Ahmed, PhD, LPCC, LICSW - Director of Research, Evaluation, and Education

Melissa Cuff - Director of Development & Communications

Beth Haney, Ph. D. - Director of Finance & Operations

Rachel Hatch - Director of Programs



Thank you to our staff who create safe and affirming spaces for youth each and every day so that youth can achieve their dreams.





Staff Retreat- The Avenues team had a fun-filled day at Charlson Meadows this summer. It's so important to have this time to connect and strengthen relationships.



FINANCIALS

For the 2023 fiscal year, July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023. View our latest 990 and audited financial statements online at <u>avenuesforyouth.org/financials</u>. Thank you to the generous donors, volunteers, and supporters who contributed during the fiscal year 2023!

AMOUNT

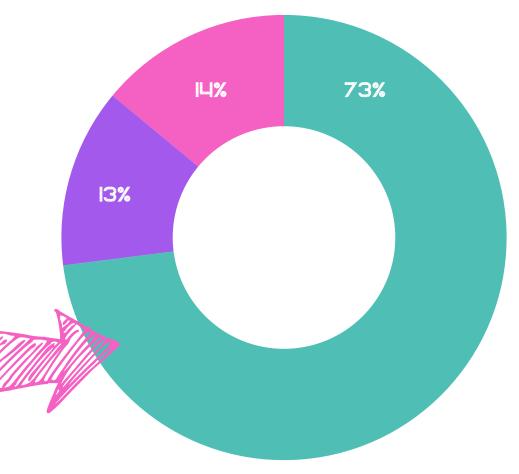
		AMOUNT
REVENUE	Contributions	\$1,588,626
	Government Grants	\$1,314,308
	Program Income	\$245,411
	In-Kind Contributions	\$588,318
	Avenues Events (net of cost)	\$112,585
	Investment Income	\$35,174
	Other Income	\$1,080
	Total Revenue	\$3,885,502
EXPENSES	Programs	\$2,476,125
	Fundraising	\$506,840
	Management & General	\$386,846
	Total Expenses	\$3,369,811
NET ASSETS	Beginning Net Assets	\$4,025,817
	Ending Net Assets	\$4,541,508
	Change in Net Assets	\$515,691











- SHELTER AND TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PROGRAMS
- CONNEQT HOST HOME PROGRAM
- YOUNG FAMILIES RAPID REHOUSING PROGRAM









