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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Are You Ready for The Darkest Night of Your Life?**

*Run/Walk To Raise Awareness and Funds for Homeless Youth*

**Anoka, Minnesota – August 15, 2017** – On any given night, there are more than 6,000 homeless youth in the State of Minnesota and many of them are right here in the north metro suburbs. When the darkness of night sets in, these young people are staying in shelters, couch-hopping or sleeping on the streets. HOPE 4 Youth, a nonprofit that provides pathways to end youth homelessness in the north metro Twin Cities, is raising money and awareness of the plight of homeless young people by bringing the community together for the second annual “The Darkest Night of Your Life 4K.”

Participants will experience many of the same things as homeless young people – darkness, loneliness, cold and quiet – while they run/walk the 4K “4” homeless youth, as well as raise funds for HOPE Place, HOPE 4 Youth’s new transitional housing program. HOPE Place is one of our long-term solutions to ending youth homelessness and we need your help to keep the doors open so that the homeless young people who call HOPE Place home can learn the skills necessary to become independent, self-sustaining adults.

This year’s 4K will be Friday, September 23, 2017, at Bunker Hills Golf Club (12800 Bunker Prairie Road NW, Coon Rapids, MN); waves begin at 8 p.m., 8:30 p.m., 9 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. The 4K course will be lit by luminaria candles. All ages are welcome to participate. The early registration fee is \$30 (includes shirt) and on-site registration fee is \$40 (shirt not guaranteed). The student (ages 18 and under) fee is \$25 and family (2 adults and 2 children ages 18 and under) fee is \$25 per family member. Registration is online at [HOPE4YouthMN.org/4K](http://HOPE4YouthMN.org/4K). The first 1,000 participants to register will receive a swag bag provided by Target which includes a water bottle, shoelaces, energy bar, lip balm, lotion, travel pillow and more.

Participants are challenged to fundraise for the 4K as well. Our goal is to raise \$50,000 from participants fundraising and fundraisers will earn incentive prizes. We’re asking that all participants, whether individuals or teams, get their smack-talking on and challenge others to fundraise. There will be recognition prizes and bragging rights in several categories including Top Fundraising Individual, Top Overall Fundraising Team, Top Fundraising Business, Top Fundraising School, Top Fundraising Government/Civic Organization, Top Fundraising Church.

If you can’t attend the 4K, then please consider donating to an individual or team so that we can reach our fundraising goal. You can donate at [HOPE4YouthMN.org/4K](http://HOPE4YouthMN.org/4K) and select the purple “Donate” button.

Last year, more than 750 people participated in the inaugural The Darkest Night of Your Life 4K. These 750 participants helped raise nearly \$50,000. This year, we hope to have 1,200 participants bring awareness to the plight of homeless young people and raise \$82,000 to help them leave their status of homelessness in the past.

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For more information, visit [HOPE4YouthMN.org/4K](https://HOPE4YouthMN.org/4K) or contact Kristin VanHeel, Marketing and Communications Director, at [kvanheel@hope4youthmn.org](mailto:kvanheel@hope4youthmn.org) or 320.309.6172.

**About HOPE 4 Youth**

*HOPE 4 Youth, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization located in Anoka, Minnesota, serves youth experiencing homelessness in the north metro suburbs by meeting basic needs, as well as helping youth find jobs, finish school, secure housing, and access health and wellness services. The Drop-In Center is open M-F, 2–7p.m. HOPE 4 Youth also provides transitional housing to homeless youth at our new studio-apartment facility, HOPE Place. **Mission:** providing pathways to end youth homelessness. **Vision:** that all youth feel safe, valued, and supported while reaching their full potential. This begins with meeting their basic needs and leads to giving them the tools and resources to thrive. For more information, please visit [HOPE4YouthMN.org](https://HOPE4YouthMN.org) or contact Kristin VanHeel at [kvanheel@hope4youthmn.org](mailto:kvanheel@hope4youthmn.org).*

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