Faces of HOPE: Anna VonRueden

Anna VonRueden has made protecting children and families her life's mission. So when she began looking for a spot on a local board, HOPE 4 Youth was a perfect fit.

> "A friend who volunteers at HOPE 4 Youth said, 'This is totally your jam,'" Anna explained.

Anna, who has extensive experience with at-risk youth and is currently the chief program officer at FamilyWise Services in Minneapolis, wanted an organization that serves her Anoka County neighbors.

"I was looking for something really specific to youth where I could bring my passionate self," she added.

Anna, left, with "Team Mom Squad" doing a virtual 4K.

Anna found that in HOPE 4 Youth, based in Anoka, and accepted a position on its board of directors in 2019 to be what she calls "a voice for the kids."

"We have a solid board whose members have strong business experience and community connection," Anna explained. "I bring different skills from the nonprofit sector and a unique perspective from having served young people who are struggling and in crisis."

Anna is committed to guiding a strategic plan for HOPE 4 Youth that continues a personalized approach to solving the challenges youth face in securing safe, stable housing.

And just as important, Anna says she'll continue to shine a light on the issue of youth homelessness, starting with making people aware of the thousands of young Minnesotans facing it every night.

> "Yes, we do have kids who are homeless right here in our neighborhood," Anna says. "And now what? What can you do besides feeling sorry for these kids?"

That's the moment Anna will be ready with ideas for people to [become involved with HOPE 4 Youth](#) and make a positive change in and around Anoka and Coon Rapids.

"We need to give these young people grace and ensure our doors will be open when they are ready to ask for help," Anna says.

This story is part of a series profiling people who've come together to support HOPE 4 Youth's mission to offer young people pathways out of homelessness. [Read more profiles](#).