

# Countdown to 2020 ... Happy New Year



As we celebrate the New Year, we look to furthering our vision of a community where all youth feel safe, valued, and supported while reaching their full potential. And doing this by providing HOPE for youth experiencing homelessness – HOPE in the form of: Housing, Outreach, Prevention, and Education/Employment. Today, we'd like to share the impact you have had in each of these areas:

**HOUSING:**

- More than **550 youth accessed resources at HOPE 4 Youth in 2019.**
- Over 80 were housed in emergency shelter through our partnerships with Stepping Stones and Merki Sober Housing.
- 16 were housed at HOPE Place, HOPE 4 Youth's supportive transitional housing program located in Coon Rapids.
- 10 young people, including eight single young mothers and their children, were housed through our Housing Navigation Program and received support from our Housing Heroes to furnish their new home.
- 96% of the youth housed through this program, including the single moms and their children, remain stably and safely housed today.

## **OUTREACH:**

Since 2013, HOPE 4 Youth has provided a Drop-In Center for youth experiencing homelessness. At the Drop-In Center, youth have access to a hot meal, laundry and shower facilities, clothing, personal care items, food, and more. Additionally, youth are connected to a case manager who works alongside them to help identify resources while providing encouragement, advocacy and support.

**This year, over 350 young people visited the Drop-In Center.**

The goal of HOPE 4 Youth is to meet each young person where they are. In addition to the Drop-In Center, we provide community and school-based outreach. This year, **approximately 200 youth experiencing homelessness were connected to basic need resources such as food, clothing, and shelter through our outreach programs.**

## **PREVENTION:**

For the past 6 years, HOPE 4 Youth has worked to change the trajectory of the young lives that walk through our doors. This year, we have instituted two new prevention programs – CIRCLE 4 HOPE and HOPE Homes.

Circle 4 HOPE, is pilot program designed to help identify the leading causes of homelessness and interrupt it. CIRCLE 4 HOPE is working to prevent homelessness by:

- Establishing community partners to meet the needs of students and their families.

- Partnering with school staff (teachers and social workers) to connect students/families directly to these community partners.

This past year, we have hired a program coordinator and are currently in four classrooms at a local charter school. We have volunteers in the 1<sup>st</sup> grade, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, 5<sup>th</sup> grade, and 6<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms - reaching over 160 students. This year's pilot has been extremely successful, and we are looking at other communities to partner with in the upcoming school year.

Our second prevention program is HOPE Homes. Often, when a young person is homeless, they are couch hopping - staying with a friend, at a distant relative's house, or on a neighbor's couch - sometimes they have stayed all three places in the same month.

HOPE Homes is a pioneering prevention program designed to stabilize youth facing homelessness, by supporting their informal hosting arrangements with caring adults already in their lives. Support is provided through mediation services, drafting shared expectations contracts, advocacy and resource support, as well as a monthly financial stipend to assist with additional housing costs.

HOPE Homes has stabilized couch hopping relationships for four youth and is working with eleven more, this includes active case management and a \$200 monthly stipend.

#### **EMPLOYMENT/EDUCATION:**

So far we have covered Housing, Outreach, and Prevention. That leaves us with Education and Employment. HOPE 4 Youth provides support and resources to assist youth with education and employment opportunities. By partnering with local businesses, community colleges, and the Anoka County Empowers Program, HOPE 4 Youth helps set each young person up for success as they work toward stable housing and self-sufficiency.

This year, 16 young people participated in the Anoka County Empowers program while residing at HOPE Place. Each youth met individually with a vocational counselor to take various assessments and determine education and vocational goals.

We are happy to report that due to your support of HOPE 4 Youth this year and our partnership with Anoka County:

- 94% of the youth received financial literacy training
- 44% are either currently enrolled in training for or have already received an Industry Recognized Certification
- 18% are currently enrolled in community college
- 1 young person finished their High School Diploma
- 1 young person is currently working toward their GED

Without your support in 2019, none of this would have been possible. We look forward to your continued support in 2020 as we work together to provide pathways to end youth homelessness in Anoka County.

Happy New Year from all of us at HOPE 4 Youth!