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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Are You Ready for The Darkest Night of Your Life?

More than 625 people are running/walking to raise awareness of the “4K” homeless youth in Minnesota

Anoka, Minnesota – September 28, 2016 - Are You Ready for The Darkest Night of Your Life? On any given night, there are 4,000 homeless youth in Minnesota and many of them are in the north metro suburbs including all of Anoka County and Hennepin County. When the darkness of night sets in, many of these youth are sleeping on the streets. HOPE 4 Youth, a nonprofit that provides pathways to end youth homelessness, is raising awareness of the plight of these young people by bringing the community together for a unique experience, The Darkest Night of Your Life 4K.

The Darkest Night of Your Life 4K is Friday, September 30, at 9:30 p.m. or 10:30 p.m. at Bunker Hills Golf Club (12800 Bunker Prairie Road NW, Coon Rapids, MN). More than 625 people have registered to experience some of the same things as these young people – darkness, loneliness, cold and quiet – while they run or walk the 2.5 miles. They will also have an opportunity to learn more about youth homelessness and our strategic plans to end it.

The 4K does more than just raise awareness, it also helps them leave their title of homelessness in the past by raising money to provide a new response for housing homeless youth in our community called HOPE Place. HOPE Place, HOPE 4 Youth’s new transitional housing in Coon Rapids, will allow 12 homeless youth, at any one time, a place to call “home” while they learn the skills they need to become a productive, healthy and housed adult. HOPE Place is scheduled to open the week of Thanksgiving 2016.

Participants are competing for the title of Top Individual Fundraiser and Top Fundraising Team. More than \$12,000 has already been raised on Crowdrise - <https://www.crowdrise.com/darkest-night-of-your-life>. Our fundraising goal is \$50,000; if each participant receives \$65 in donations before the event then we will exceed our goal.

The Darkest Night of Your Life 4K will be an annual event that will support the operational expenses of HOPE Place. It is our hope that it grows each year.

Early registration fee is \$30 and on-site registration fee is \$40 (long-sleeve shirt not guaranteed). Register online at www.HOPE4YouthMn.org/4K.

About HOPE 4 Youth

HOPE 4 Youth, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization located in Anoka, Minnesota, serves homeless youth and those at-risk of becoming homeless in the north metro (including all of Anoka County and parts of Hennepin County) 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. **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 or contact Kristin VanHeel at kvanheel@hope4youthmn.org.

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