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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Darkest Night of Your Life 4K Allows Participants to Experience What Homeless Youth Face When They Are on the Streets

Coon Rapids, Minnesota – April 11, 2019 – On any given night, there are more than 6,000 homeless youth in Minnesota and 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, is raising awareness of their plight, as well as funds, by bringing the community together for the fourth annual **The Darkest Night of Your Life 4K** on Friday, May 3rd at Bunker Hills Golf Club.

Participants will experience many of the same things as homeless young people – darkness, loneliness, cold and quiet – while they walk/run the 4K to support homeless youth, as well as raise funds to ensure they have the tools needed so they never have to experience them again. Much like Erin, a formerly homeless young person who, rather than stay in a dysfunctional home, was sleeping in apartment complex alleyways. When we learned of Erin and her situation, our Case Manager found her and brought her to HOPE 4 Youth. Erin did not want to stay in a shelter and luckily HOPE 4 Youth was able to place her at HOPE Place, transitional living program, very quickly. Since finding her new home, she has graduated from Andover High School with honors and is now in college, working towards a music degree.

What • 4K Walk/Run

When • Friday, May 3, 2019; 4K waves at 8 p.m. (Family Wave when it is still light out), 8:40 p.m., 9:20 p.m.; Early packet pick-up will be Thursday, May 2, 2019 from 4:30-7:30 p.m. or Friday, May 3, 2019, beginning at 6 p.m.

Where • Bunker Hills Golf Club, 12800 Bunker Prairie Road NW, Coon Rapids, MN

Cost • Now-April 14: \$30 (includes shirt), April 15-May 2: \$40 (includes shirt), On-site: \$50 (shirt not guaranteed), Students (Ages 13-18): \$20 (no shirt), Youth (Ages 12-4): \$10 (no shirt), and Ages 3 & Under: free

Participants are also challenged to fundraise for the 4K as well. The goal is to raise \$20,000 from participants fundraising and they will earn incentive prizes. There will be recognition prizes and bragging rights in several categories including Top Fundraising Individual, Top Overall Fundraising Team, and Largest Team.

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 and select the purple "Donate" button.

For more information, visit HOPE4YouthMN.org/4K or contact Kristin VanHeel, Marketing and Communications Director, at kvanheel@hope4youthmn.org or 320.309.6172.

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About HOPE 4 Youth

HOPE 4 Youth, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization headquartered in Coon Rapids, Minnesota, serves youth experiencing homelessness by providing hot meals, hot showers, warm clothing, food and hygiene products, laundry facilities, computer and internet access, locked storage for personal items, and case management; meeting their health needs at our on-site clinic, HOPE Clinic, as well as the needs of young parents through HOPE 4 New Parents; secure housing for them through our Housing Navigation program and at HOPE Place, our transitional housing facility; assist them with employment and educational opportunities through our Opening Doors program; offer a spiritually-based program to the youth who are looking for one, through HOPE TreeHouse; and provide basic resources and referrals through outreach on the streets and in schools. In 2019, HOPE 4 Youth launched innovative programming aimed at preventing youth from becoming homeless and showing up at the Drop-In Center's doors as an unaccompanied, young adult. HOPE 4 Youth also operates *hope's closet*, a resale boutique filled with handpicked, quality, new and gently-used women's clothing, shoes and accessories, small household decor and gift items with 100% of the profit benefiting HOPE 4 Youth. For more information, please visit HOPE4YouthMN.org or contact Kristin VanHeel at kvanheel@hope4youthmn.org.

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