



HOST HOME PROGRAM

AVENUES FOR HOMELESS YOUTH

Host Homes: A Community Response to Youth Homelessness 2017

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HOST HOME VIDEO

YOUTH HOMELESSNESS IN MINNESOTA

At least 6,000 youth and young adults are experiencing homelessness on any night in Minnesota. Youth homelessness is not just an urban problem; youth are homeless in urban, suburban and rural communities.

For those of you who like statistics and want to know more about numbers related to youth and homelessness in MN, go here: [Wilder Research Site](#)



CAUSES AND UNDERLYING FACTORS



Up to 40% of the homeless youth identify as LGBTQ nationwide, the majority of whom are youth of color.

In order to end homelessness, we must have a commitment to racial and economic justice.

AVENUES FOR HOMELESS YOUTH

Shelter and Transitional Housing for 300+ youth per year in Twin Cities, MN.



Six Programs:

- Shelter and TLP in North Minneapolis (21 beds)
- Shelter and TLP in Brooklyn Park (12 beds)
- Avenues for Young Families
- GLBT Host Home Program
- Minneapolis & Suburban Host Home Program
- ConneQT Host Home Program

AVENUES HOST HOME PROGRAMS



GLBT Host Home Program

- Created in 1997 by GLBT community members in partnership with youth advocates/orgs
- Nationally-recognized model



ConneQT Host Home Program

- A pilot of Point Source Youth
- ConneQT Collaboration (Avenues, The Link, RECLAIM)

AVENUES HOST HOME PROGRAMS



Suburban Host Home Program

- Created by community volunteers and youth-serving agencies in fall 2011
- Youth from Hennepin County suburbs

Minneapolis Host Home Program

- Launched fall 2012
- Youth from Minneapolis

Programs Combined in 2017



WHY HOST HOMES

- Safer transition-like housing, rooted in community, non-institutional
- Cost-effective
- The Intangibles/Icing on the Cake:
 - Long-term/life-long relationships can be established
 - Changes lives – youth AND hosts
 - By extension, changes the community



BASIC OPERATION

- Outside the system
- We recruit, screen, train and support community volunteers who then provide short-term, supportive housing and food for youth who are homeless or precariously housed
- Program manager supports hosts – regular contact, monthly meetings, support groups
- Youth referred by many partners – homeless youth agencies, school and county social workers, community advocates
- Youth receive ongoing case management

KEY FEATURES

Community Advisory or Action Council

- Reflects the community, activists
- Not just social service providers
- Key to host recruitment and program promotion
- Helps Program Manager maintain integrity and intent of the program – challenge and support



Values and Understandings of our HHPs

- See attached document



KEY FEATURES

Host recruitment and screening

- Community organizing, relationship-building
- Application form, background checks, 2-3 interviews, reference letters

Host training (16 hours)

- Videos to provide context to homelessness
- Training on positive youth development, trauma and resiliency, gender/transgender 101, anti-racism/white privilege
- Focus on host applicants: self-reflection exercises, power and privilege awareness
- Panels of past hosts and youth

INTENT VS IMPACT

“Stop centering your experience and identity in the conversation by making this about the intent of your actions instead of their impact.”

Lesson Learned

Hosts and staff need to consistently look at the impact of power and privilege in a host home environment

KEY FEATURES - HHP

Careful youth referrals

- Case manager needs to work with youth at least one month prior to referral (typically much longer)
- Youth are voluntary participants...they are never “placed”
- When youth call who have no case manager/connection to advocate, our HHP Case Manager will work with them and assess program appropriateness – can still provide case management even if youth can’t or decides not to be in HHP

Youth-driven matching process

Consistent support of hosts and youth

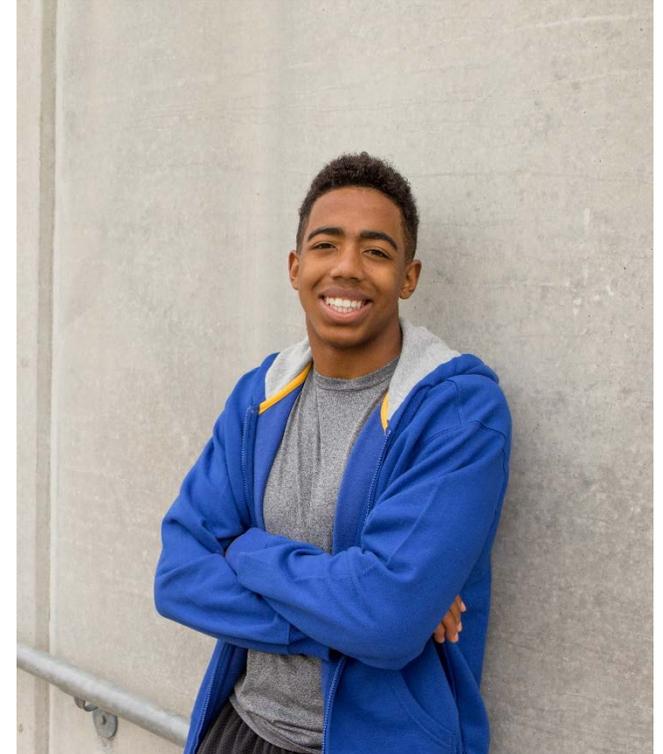
KEY FEATURES - HHP

Ongoing host training and support by program manager

- Calls and meetings, as needed
- Monthly support groups (all programs together)
- Monthly meeting in the home
- 2-3 trainings per year
- Social events

Ongoing youth support by our case manager

- Meets youth where they're at, both emotionally and physically
- Intensive, flexible



HOST HOME SCALE

Our current operational capacity for each host home program is 20 to 25 homes in the program, which allows up to 10 young people to live in host homes at a time. Based on our experience, at least half the host homes will be 'on hold' at any given time, which means the hosts have had a youth in the home who has moved out, and they are taking time off before welcoming another youth.

EVALUATION

Most qualitative feedback we receive is through informal conversations and engagement with participants.

We report annually on the following quantitative outcomes:

- *Outcome 1:* Secure 5 additional host homes annually;
- *Outcome 2:* Support up to 10 youth in host homes at any given time;
- *Outcome 3:* Youth will transition into stable housing: Measurement A: 75% will move into their own housing or other supportive housing;
- Measurement B: 75% of those will continue to have stable housing at one-year follow-up.

In addition, our HHPs continue their commitment to the following two outcomes:

- *Outcome 4:* Support creation of host home programs in other communities by providing consultation and sharing information resources,
- *Outcome 5:* Seek to end homelessness through prevention strategies, such as community engagement and social justice advocacy.

“LEAP OF FAITH”

- It will be messy and possibly magical.
- Manage expectations. Guarantee there will be conflicts and really difficult times. Hosts can't expect youth to be “grateful.” And hosts will always wish they knew more about the youth.
- Help hosts set clear boundaries, recognize their issues and triggers, and do self-work.
- Consistently talk about assumptions, power and privilege, especially with white, middle-class hosts.

Communicate, train, support, listen, challenge... repeat.

SPEAKING OF ASSUMPTIONS

What do you think is the main reason that brings potential hosts to the GLBT Host Home Program?

Or, in other words:

What is the most highlighted narrative for why LGBTQ youth homelessness exists?

LESSONS LEARNED

- Must be created and owned by the community. Can't be another social service program.
- Bias against government funding – do not want program to become rules-based, institutional.
- Good case management is crucial. Our Suburban and Minneapolis HHPs rely on referring partners to continue providing case management to youth while they are in host homes. But referring partners often lack capacity to case manage consistently.
- **Must always question our role and commitment to social justice.**



IN CLOSING

- What did you walk away with?
- Challenges in your own community implementing a host home program?

THANK YOU



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