



Otto Bremer Foundation Makes Big Down-Payment on Expanded Services for Homeless Youth in Twin Cities

Avenues for Homeless Youth to Add 5 Shelter Beds

December 20, 2011

Thanks to a major commitment from the Otto Bremer Foundation, Avenues for Homeless Youth will add 5 beds at its homeless youth shelter in North Minneapolis. With this expansion, Avenues will have 20 program beds and 1 overnight emergency bed, for a total of 21 beds for homeless youth.

The Otto Bremer Foundation also awarded grants to five other agencies to expand services to homeless youth -- Catholic Charities for its Hope Street Shelter, Face to Face for its SafeZone drop-in center, Lutheran Social Services for the Streetworks Collaborative, Salvation Army for its Booth Brown House and Youthlink for its drop-in center.

The foundation's full commitment of \$4 million over three years adds 28 youth shelter beds in Minneapolis and St. Paul, increases services and access for youth at the two drop-in centers, and puts six much-needed homeless youth outreach workers on the streets.

There are 2,500 homeless youth, age 21 and younger, statewide on any given night, and 1,375 in the seven-county metropolitan area on any given night, according to a [Wilder Research report](#). Currently, there are only 80 shelter beds for homeless youth in the state, 65 of which are in the Twin Cities area.

Deborah Loon, executive director of Avenues for Homeless Youth, said, "This amazing commitment from the Otto Bremer Foundation significantly increases our collective ability to support more of the growing population of homeless youth. It gives us much-needed cash to realize Avenues' goal of expanding services, but also serves as a challenge to the community."

"The community benefits when all youth have opportunities for healthy development," said Charlotte Johnson, an Otto Bremer Foundation trustee. "We are pleased to invest in this coordinated, collaborative response to the growing problem of youth homelessness."

The Otto Bremer Foundation grant provides up-front capital for Avenues' shelter expansion, plus about two-thirds of the operating costs for the first three years of the additional beds. The agency will look to the community for the other one-third over three years to fully fund the expanded services.

To help raise the balance needed from the community, part of the Otto Bremer Foundation grants will come to Avenues and the other agencies in the form of “challenge grants.” The first challenge grant is a 2:1 grant – a new dollar contributed will be matched with \$2 from the foundation, turning it instantly into \$3 (up to the maximum of the grant).

“We believe this community can work together to end youth homelessness,” said William Lipschultz, an Otto Bremer Foundation trustee. “We challenge others to help support this important work.”

“This major investment from the Otto Bremer Foundation comes at a critical juncture in our 10-year initiative to end homelessness,” said Cathy ten Broeke, coordinator of the City of Minneapolis and Hennepin County’s Office to End Homelessness. “Their confidence in our collective work is going to make a very significant impact on our goal.”

Loon added, “This grant is a big down-payment on Avenues’ goal of expanding much-needed supports for our community’s homeless youth. But many young people will still be on the streets every night. We hope and believe the community will meet this challenge to fully support its homeless youth.”

The Avenues Board of Directors is hard at work planning a special fundraising campaign to sustain the shelter expansion. For more information, contact Deborah Loon at 612-801-1935 or deb@avenuesforyouth.org.

About Avenues for Homeless Youth

The mission of Avenues for Homeless Youth is to provide emergency shelter, short-term housing and supportive services for homeless youth in a safe and nurturing environment. Through such service, Avenues seeks to help youth achieve their personal goals and make a positive transition to young adulthood.

For more information about Avenues for Homeless Youth and its programs, visit www.avenuesforyouth.org.