



# 2013 ANNUAL REPORT

LIFE HOUSE

*Duluth*

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

### **Challenging. Rewarding. Inspiring.**

Those are just a few of the words I would use to describe my first year as Executive Director at Life House. For almost 25 years, Life House has been a second home (and for many, a first) for homeless and at-risk youth in the Duluth community. It is a privilege and honor to lead this innovative organization into the future.

In 2013, Life House shored up our current programs, increased outreach and enhanced community partnerships, laying the groundwork for future expansion. Life House received our largest-ever grant – more than \$250,000 – from the State of Minnesota Department of Human Services to support our transitional housing program and drop-in center. Life House, in partnership with Safe Haven Shelter & Resource Center and PAVSA, was one of four agencies selected under Minnesota’s Safe Harbor Act to provide emergency shelter for sex trafficked youth. These investments, coupled with the tremendous support Life House received from throughout our generous community, have allowed us to add staff and grow our services to more effectively address the unique needs of our Life House youth.

Thank you wholeheartedly for being a part of the Life House family. We are looking forward to even greater things in 2014!

*Maude Dornfeld*

Maude Dornfeld  
Executive Director



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## 2013 LIFE HOUSE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Larry Nord, Co-Chair  
Orman, Nord & Hurd - Attorneys at Law

Justin Black  
Cartier Agency

Laurie Hull  
Center for Alcohol & Drug Treatment

Tina Welsh, Co-Chair  
Retired

Patrick Boyle  
Fond du Lac

Nick Lepak  
Duluth Police Department

David Bard, Secretary  
First United Methodist Church

Sheila Hawk  
Essentia Health

Jessica Sterle  
Law Office of Jessica L. Sterle, P.A.

Jim Paulson, Treasurer  
Small Business Owner

Shane Jopke  
U.S. Bank

Leanne Ventrella  
Minnesota 6th Judicial District

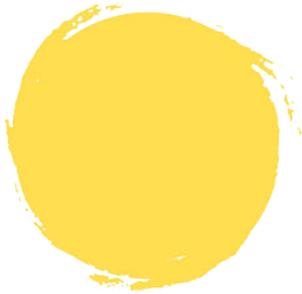
David Barnes  
U.S. Bank

Lindsay Lahti  
The College of St. Scholastica

*“It’s a great place to help you get organized, figure things out and get on your feet. I’ve never felt rejected coming to Life House. I’ve always gotten the help I needed.” — Felicia*

# LIFE HOUSE LIFELINE

Life House has five program areas to address the unique needs of each of the youth who come through our doors: the Youth Drop-In Center, Education, Employment, Housing, and Mental Health & Wellness. These programs are all a part of the comprehensive approach to providing services that we call the *Life House Lifeline*.



## Youth Drop-In Center

The **Youth Drop-In Center** is the heart of Life House and offers:

- **Basic needs** like food, clothing, & parenting supplies.
- **Referrals** to other Life House programs or community resources.
- **Outreach** to locate and build relationships with street youth.
- **Life skills classes** and support groups.

## Health



The Life House **Mental Health & Wellness Program** seeks to improve physical, mental and spiritual wellness:

- **On-site, no-fee licensed therapist**
- **Intensive Case Management**
- **Culturally specific programming led by cultural experts**
- **Rule 25 & Diagnostic assessment**
- **Safe Harbor Program support**

## Housing



The goal of the **Housing Program** is to provide safe housing options for at-risk and homeless youth:

- **Intensive Housing Program**, providing Transitional and Permanent Supportive Housing.
- **Rapid Rehousing Program**, providing emergency deposits or first month's rent.
- **Preventive Housing Program**, providing emergency rent support or landlord/tenant mediation.
- **Safe Harbor Program**, providing emergency shelter for sexually exploited youth.

## Employment



The **Employment Program** provides an environment that helps youth gain job skills in order to become self-sufficient:

- **Incentive based job-skills training programs**
- **Resume writing & job placement assistance**
- **Help accessing public benefits**
- **Duluth @ Work collaborative**

## Education



The Life House **Education Program** offers alternative, on-site educational assessment and lesson plans for:

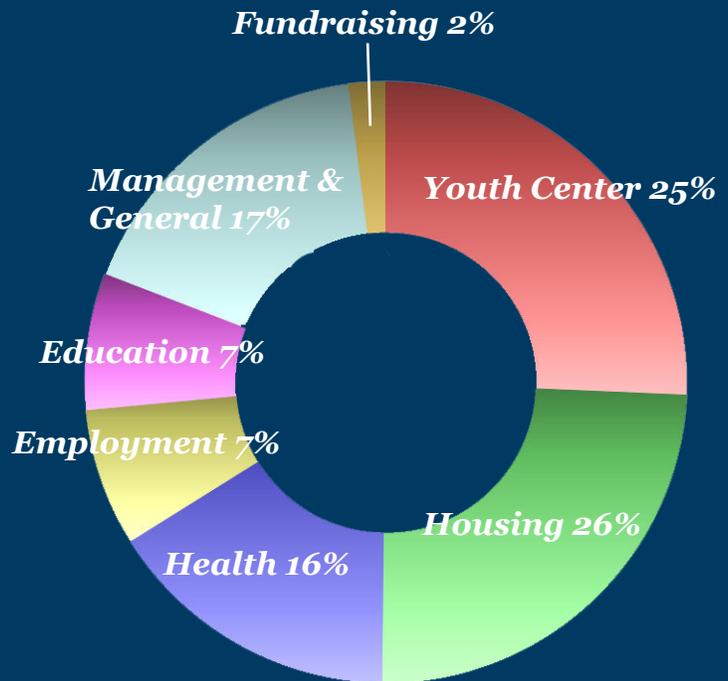
- **High School enrollment & completion**
- **High School credit recovery**
- **GED preparation**
- **College entrance exam prep**
- **College counseling**

# OUR NUMBERS

## Major Program and Support Services Fiscal Year 2013

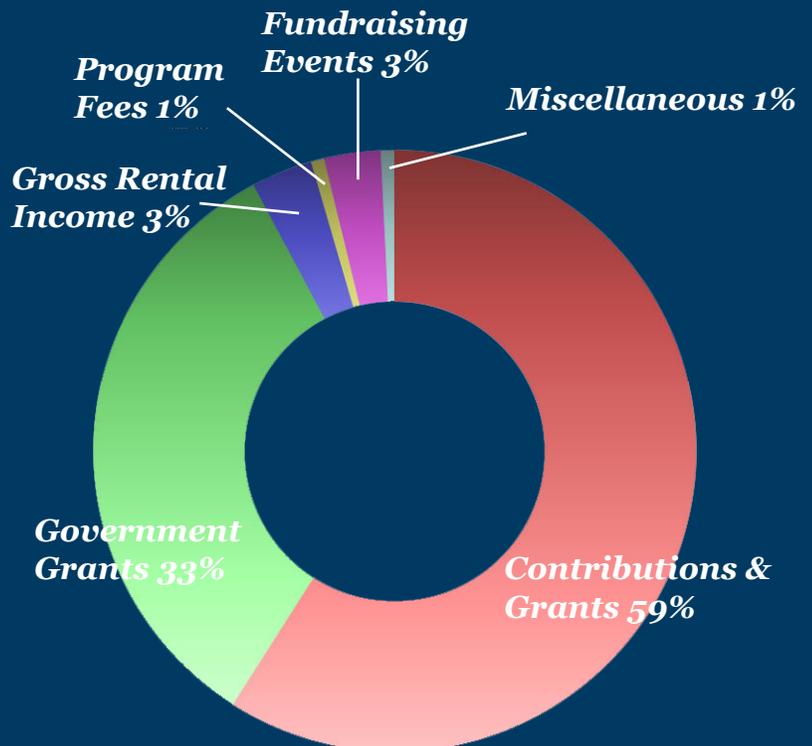
### Expenses

● Youth Center.....	\$206,484
+ Health.....	\$134,454
▲ Housing.....	\$216,333
\$ Employment.....	\$61,965
✎ Education.....	\$62,307
Management & General.....	\$144,375
Fundraising.....	\$16,989
Total.....	\$842,907



## Fiscal Year 2013 Revenue

Contributions & Grants.....	\$468,067
Government Grants.....	\$263,282
Fundraising Events.....	\$26,003
Program Fees.....	\$5,636
Gross Rental Income.....	\$24,000
Miscellaneous.....	\$6,130
Total.....	\$793,118



# OUR YOUTH

Many youth first come to us needing clothes, a warm meal, or someone to talk to. Maybe they've been kicked out of their homes, are being sexually exploited, have a mental illness, or have been abandoned by parents or caregivers. Maybe they have drug addiction issues or are trying to care for small children of their own.

**Whatever brings them here, we never turn them away.**

## Youth we serve:

- 603 youth in 2013 (plus 55 of their children)
- Ages 14-21
- 51% male/49% female
- 60% are youth of color
- 14% identify as LGBTQ
- 15% are parenting at least one child
- 10% were pregnant at the time of the survey
- 56% live in extreme poverty
- 31% reported as being homeless upon program intake
- More than half we serve have been homeless at least once
- 31% have experienced domestic violence
- 42% reported an out-of-home placement

## Cheyenne, Life House Youth

I lived in Utah until I was four. My mom and I came here on a trip, and got stranded here and have been here for 15 years. When we came here I had no shoes, my mom had no money, we were staying in a shelter.

It was hard because the only people I knew were all living in the shelter. It was kind of rocky and when I got into my teens, I started acting out. I was a really troubled child. It started when I was in elementary school. I was young and I was fighting. It continued through middle school and then I got kicked out of school.

I became an alcoholic when I was in high school. My whole 9th grade, I was a 3.0 student, but I was never there. So I was always in truancy court. Plus, I was always in court just for my juvenile problems. But I was never given the opportunity to show myself again, to prove that I wanted to be there. And so they pretty much kicked me out of school—and I didn't really care.

That's when I got into the downtown population. I was young—I was like 13—and didn't know anybody. There were people around, they were older, and they were drinking and hanging out and doing whatever they wanted to do and I had to be home at a certain time. I felt like, "Well, I'm not gonna do that! I'll just run away."

Then I started to realize that my friends weren't my friends. They were only around me because I had the money to support all of our habits. I looked at myself and realized that's not who I am, I'm way better than that, I have potential for so much more, and I have people out there who will help me get there, so why don't I? And I've been on the right path ever since.



# 2013 HIGHLIGHTS



- **33** Life House youth completed job preparedness programs.
- **34** Life House youth were honored at our Annual Graduation Ceremony.
- **209** Independent Living Skills Classes were offered.
- **8** Life House youth enrolled in College.
- **45** homeless youth found safe and secure housing with the assistance of our Housing Program.
- **5** Life House youth earned a GED.
- **9** Life House youth earned a high school diploma.
- **54** youth accessed free mental health services.
- **More than 8,000** warm meals were provided in the Youth Center.



# OUR THANKS

Life House would like to thank the more than 250 individuals and community organizations who contributed to the successes of our youth in 2013. We couldn't do it without your continued support. We would also like to thank the following foundations and organizations for their confidence in our programs and staff:

Amsoil  
Anonymous  
City Center Housing  
City of Duluth  
Cub Community Cares  
Delta Dental  
Duluth LISC  
Essentia Health  
Hearth Connection  
Lahti Family Foundation  
Mardag Foundation  
Miller Dwan Foundation  
North Star Foundation  
Northland Foundation  
Open Your Heart  
Ordean Foundation  
RBC Foundation  
State of Minnesota  
St. Louis County  
TJX Foundation  
United Way

# ABOUT LIFE HOUSE

In the early nineties, founder Mary Robillard asked her son why his friend had not left their house after a sleep over two days before. He answered, "Because he has nowhere else to go." She decided to take action to address what was happening in Duluth.

Incorporated in 1991, Life House goals are to help at-risk, homeless youth become healthy, positive adults. Our mission is *"to provide a safe harbor for enhancing the lives of youth at risk."* Our Youth Drop-In Center and primary services are located in the LIFELINE Building, two blocks from the public transit center, downtown Duluth, Minnesota. Life House services span the St. Louis County region. Today, Life House has 17 full-time staff.