



2015
ANNUAL
REPORT

LIFE HOUSE
Duluth

FROM THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR



Dear Friends,

2015 has been a year of forward progress for Life House. While the number of youth seeking services is growing, our ability to serve them is as well. We almost doubled our number of staff over the last year to fill the gap. This extraordinary group of professionals are deeply committed to making a difference in the lives of homeless and street youth and truly represent the heart of Life House.

This year, we began to meet the desperate need for housing and supportive services for commercially and sexually exploited youth. Life House was honored to be selected as one of a handful of agencies in Minnesota to receive Safe Harbor Act funding, and in partnership with One Roof Community Housing, we opened the doors to Sol House in July. I have seen this need in the Duluth community since I started at Life House in 2001, and I am so proud to play a part in providing this long-needed service to minor victims of sex trafficking in Minnesota.

We also received funding from the Office of Violence Against Women to provide supportive housing for survivors of domestic violence. With these new programs, we have expanded our capacity to 32 units of housing with a goal to expand to 50 units by 2020. Compared to 2001, we only had 10 units. While this is significant progress, there is still much work to be done. On any given night in Duluth, there are over 100 youth without safe, stable housing.

I feel so honored to have been part of Life House for nearly 15 years. I've watched it grow from "The little agency that could" to where it is today, a statewide leader in providing a wide range of innovative services to homeless and street youth.

Life House simply could not have achieved this incredible growth without support from our dedicated funders, community partners, and our loyal individual donors like you. Thank you for your commitment to supporting Life House and the dreams of the youth we serve.

Erich Lutz

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RECONNECTING YOUTH TO DREAMS

The real trouble started when my mom died. My mom was everything to me. She taught me to express myself even if others thought it to be out of the norm. What I remember most about her is how no matter what was wrong she always put a smile on your face! My mom forever had an impact on everything I do now, but it wasn't like that initially when she died. I felt that little girl I once was died the day my mom died in my arms.

I was numb to everyone and everything. I just wanted my pain to stop. I cried myself to sleep every night for about 4 years straight hating my family and myself, thinking it would be better if I was gone so my pain would stop... well guess what? I couldn't because for some reason I had a fire burning inside me and I remembered that my mom loved me and instead of looking at myself through my eyes, I decided one day to look through her eyes.

Life changed for the best when I walked into Life House and, no, I'm not just saying that, I mean it! I had been homeless so many times with no hope, but they moved me into their supportive housing program. We had our ups and downs and I definitely challenged them, but besides all that, they really cared and didn't look down on me and I thank them more than they know.

With Life House, I improved in many ways: I kept the same job, I got a new car and then ... I BOUGHT A DUPLEX, last year, when I was only 23 years old!! Every day that I walk into my house I have a smile on my face, kissing my kitty telling her how much I love her and then I go to my bunny and admire how adorable she is and then I tell her how much she melts my heart! Yes, you're probably thinking, how did this person, who was so angry about everything is so darn happy now? Well, being angry is a choice, just like being happy is a choice and I choose to fight for being happy because I know I am worth it.

- Life House Youth

THE YOUTH CENTER SERVED 11,378 MEALS
33 FIELD TRIPS & 36 FUN NIGHTS WERE HELD

92% FEEL SAFE AND WELCOME AT LIFE HOUSE
84% FEEL A PART OF A COMMUNITY

85 RECEIVED MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS SERVICES
81% CONNECTED TO NEEDED HEALTH RESOURCES IN THE COMMUNITY

30 YOUTH ENROLLED & PLACED IN OUR HOUSING PROGRAM
92% REMAINED STABLE IN HOUSING FOR AT LEAST 6 MONTHS
70% INCREASED AND/OR MAINTAINED INCOME

58 SUCCESSFULLY RECOVERED CREDITS, MAINTAINED ENROLLMENT FOR SEMESTER, OR GRADUATED HIGH SCHOOL
179 YOUTH VISITED THE FUTURES COMPUTER LAB
63 RECEIVED JOB COACHING AND CAREER COUNSELING
37 OBTAINED EMPLOYMENT OR ENROLLED IN JOB TRAINING PROGRAM

2015 FINANCIAL REPORT

EXPENSE

Futures	\$117,954	8.4%
Housing	\$649,083	46.0%
Youth Center	\$241,686	17.1%
Wellness	\$204,327	14.5%
Management/General	\$187,515	13.3%
Fundraising	<u>\$10,972</u>	0.8%
Total	\$1,411,537	

REVENUE

Contributions & Grants	\$593,378	40.9%
Government Grants	\$770,362	53.1%
Fundraising Events	\$54,169	3.7%
Program Fees	\$6,428	0.4%
Rental Income	\$24,900	1.7%
Miscellaneous	<u>\$794</u>	0.1%
Total	\$1,450,031	

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Opened in July 2015, Sol House houses up to five young victims of trafficking and exploitation with 24-hour supportive staff, daily activities, and comprehensive services including trauma-informed therapy, substance abuse counseling, and education and employment support.



WHAT'S IN A NAME?

WARM, TIMELESS.

SOL, LATIN FOR SUN, POWERFULLY
RISES ANEW EACH DAY.

FIERCE, ENERGETIC, ABLE.

THE LION STANDS FOR EVERYTHING
THESE YOUTH HAVE OVERCOME AND
EVERYTHING THEY WILL ACCOMPLISH
IN THE FUTURE. A SYMBOL OF A NEW
DAY IN ANCIENT TEXTS.

SOL HOUSE GIVES SPACE FOR
A NEW DAY AND NEW LIFE.

We thank the following for their support towards the opening of Sol House:

State of Minnesota
Canadian National
Lahti Family Foundation
Mardag Foundation
One Roof Community Housing
Patrick and Aimee Butler Family Foundation
Women's Foundation of Minnesota
Several Generous Individual Donors

“We have long admired the work Life House does with our community's youth, so we were honored to assist in acquiring and renovating Sol House to help Life House expand their work to serve sexually exploited youth.”

Jeff Corey, Executive Director
One Roof Community Housing

LOOKING BACK ON 2015...

A group of youth travel to Camp Widjiwagan in Ely for outdoor fun and adventure.



Prom 2015: "A Night in Paris" takes place at the Radisson Hotel.



Youth Center staff Gabe Mayfield starts hosting a monthly variety show for the youth to share their talents with the community.



Life House holds its 2nd annual A Night to Shine Graduation Gala.



Program Director Erich Lutz receives Youth Intervention Programs Association (YIPA) Friends of Youth Award

For their Camp-in-a-Box event, students from Denfeld & East High Schools slept in cardboard boxes outside to raise awareness and funds to help homeless youth.



Life House enters a float in the Christmas City of the North Parade.

Holiday celebrations see record attendance with over 100 youth receiving presents and meals.

