



# Minnesota Host Home Network



**Eat a tasty burger on Monday, August 6, between 4 & 10 p.m.** and [The Lowbrow](#) will donate 5% of your tab to the Minnesota Host Home Network and 5% to Avenues for Homeless Youth! That's a yummy win-win! And did we mention beer on tap and patio seating?

Plus Host Home Mom will be on hand to tell you all about what it takes to become a host! And as a mom, she's also available to consult about healthy menu items, including vegetarian and gluten-free options.

Looking forward to seeing and updating y'all on all we've had going on!

The Lowbrow  
4244 Nicollet Avenue South  
Minneapolis

## *Director's Report* **Turning the Tide**



I wish you could have been there too, with the youth who've faced homelessness, the church-based volunteers and social service staff from Elk River, Mankato, Northfield, Rochester, the Twin Cities, and Washington County who met on July 23 at Wilder Research in St. Paul for a Minnesota Host Home Network Huddle.

From a youth who's faced homelessness, you would have learned that the need for caring connection is primary: "There were times when I wanted someone to care about me even more than I wanted a place to stay."

From the director of a drop-in center, you would have heard a fierce determination to cut through red tape: "I want you to tell a kid that they can't stay with their best friend's mom!"

And from a woman of color, you would have learned about informal hosting as a community norm: "This is what my community already does—we take care of one another...."

Taken together, these comments portend an exciting shift. I'm seeing a readiness to move beyond simply giving lip service to the importance of caring connections for youth facing homelessness to actually doing the hard work of making that belief the foundation for all our interactions with these young people.



## A Successful Spring House Party!

A lively crowd of MHHN supporters gathered on May 22nd at the home of Jan Kleiman and Fadil Santosa for our second annual house party.

The group enjoyed light refreshments as Jacqueline and members of the advisory board offered updates on The Interview Project, recent research on the challenges staff confront while working with youth facing homelessness, and the organization's new mission and vision statements.

Supporters contributed their own experiences and insights — as well as much needed donations. The event raised more than \$3,000!

Many thanks to Jan and Fadil for hosting the event and to all those who attended.

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## Thanks to our monthly donors . . .

We especially appreciate all those individuals who have pledged a monthly donation to MHHN:

Craig Cox & Sharon Parker

Mary Hinz

Jan Kleinman &

Fadil Santosa

Jerry & Susan Lane

Kathryn Nordhagen

Aaron Zimmerman

But that's work that's hard to do in isolation, which is what makes our Huddles so essential to moving this approach forward. Our Huddles serve as a learning community to test drive strategies as well as metrics to measure our success at facilitating these positive ongoing relationships.

We're grateful to the Sauer Family Foundation for underwriting our latest Huddle. I invite your questions or comments about how we can move this work forward. Contact me at [jw@jacquelinewhite.net](mailto:jw@jacquelinewhite.net). Do good and be well!

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## What We're Hearing Hosting Can Be a Financial Stress

Through *The Interview Project*, the Minnesota Host Home Network has interviewed youth facing homelessness who are staying with adults they already know as well as their informal hosts. Our aim? To understand what is needed to better stabilize these arrangements so we can pilot effective strategies and advocate for resources.

Here's what we heard from "Gigi," a suburban Twin Cities woman who stepped in to host her best friend's son when her friend went into treatment for an addiction relapse:

**Interviewer:** Is there anything that you can think of that might help the relationship with the youth go smoother?

**Gigi:** The financial piece of it is really hard on me.

**Interviewer:** Can you talk more about that?

**Gigi:** The meals have increased. I work 50-60 hours a week just to make ends meet. I'm struggling to make it paycheck to paycheck. . . . I . . . about once or twice a month, I have to go donate blood so I have enough money to put gas in the car so I can make it to work. Finances are bad right now . . . really bad.

**Interviewer:** And, and you found out about this survey how?

**Gigi:** At the food shelf. Like this is my payday week. I don't get paid until Friday. That \$20 you gave me for this is going to get me enough gas to make it to payday.

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## To individuals who've contributed so far this year

Bev Bachel  
Mary Hartnett  
Karen Heegaard & Chuck LeGros  
John Larsen & Mike Stuart  
Steve Lassiter  
Pete Magee  
Margaret Todd Maitland  
Catharine Reid  
Glynis Shea  
Joan Stockinger  
Troy Wildenberg

## And a very special thanks to the Sauer Family Foundation for their generous support!

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### Every Little Bit Helps

The Minnesota Host Home Network runs a lean operation. We value—and spend wisely—every dollar we receive. If you'd like to support transformational change for youth facing homelessness, we'd greatly appreciate your tax-deductible gift.

We're a fiscally sponsored project of Propel Nonprofits. Kindly make checks payable to "Propel Nonprofits" with "Minnesota Host Home Network" in the memo line and mail to:

Propel Nonprofits  
One Main Street SE #600  
Minneapolis MN 55414  
[Or donate easily online through GiveMN.](#)

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## Meet Our New Advisory Board Member!



The most recent addition to the Minnesota Host Home Network Advisory Board brings some youthful energy and academic expertise to our organization.

Iris Castro, a social work major at St. Catherine University, offered valuable assistance on The Interview Project before joining the board last winter. Her insightful perspective has already made a lasting impact on our work.

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## On the Airwaves

We're spreading the word about the importance of permanent connections for youth facing homelessness! Minnesota Host Home Network director Jacqueline White appeared on the KFAI public affairs program *TruthToTell*, alongside Cindy Ley, the executive director of Open Doors for Youth in Elk River, to discuss how they're collaborating to develop strategies to build Circles of Support for youth.

Amy Perez offered real world perspective about couch-hopping, including her approach of "trying to be invisible--you know, if they don't notice me I can stay longer." The Minnesota Host Home Network is looking at how to better support what we're calling "informal hosting arrangements," including mediating an agreement about shared expectations so that a young person doesn't have to feel they need to resort to living under the radar just so they have a place to stay.

[Check out the conversation here.](#)

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**Our Vision:** Communities embrace youth facing homelessness, prioritizing their deep human need for connection and belonging.

**Our Mission:** We catalyze system change for youth facing homelessness by championing lasting relationships with the caring adults already in their lives who are not their service providers. We develop strategies to fortify these life-giving connections and advocate for investing in their transformative power.

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