

CLOSE KNIT

LOVING YOUTH OUT OF HOMELESSNESS



We've Been Huddling!

We were pleased to host Andrea Simonett, the state's point person on youth homelessness, at our July Huddle. Minnesota is taking the exciting step of integrating the newly proposed outcome measures for the four federal outcomes for ending youth homelessness (stable housing, permanent connections, education/ employment, and social-emotional well-being) into the existing metrics for the Homeless Youth Act.

Andrea presented preliminary

Director's Report

Helping Real Youth

Who Are Facing a Housing Crisis

I pour a lot of my energy into big-picture thinking, asking what it will take to shift our response to youth homelessness to think beyond remedying mere "houselessness" to making sure that young people have the love and caring connections that are really what make a house a home.

So the stories of how our work is helping actual youth fill my heart with hope. We're pleased to share we've begun consulting with [HOPE 4 Youth](#) in Anoka to create their [HOPE Homes](#) program to stabilize informal hosting arrangements with caring community members. Here's one story:

"Paula" was in a bind. She'd been staying with her grandma's neighbors in an overcrowded apartment, but they'd set a deadline: Paula had to be out in a week. The 20-year-old high school graduate called HOPE 4 Youth drop-in center.



The next day, *HOPE Homes specialist Brenda Pritchard* helped Paula fill out a "Circle Map." They identified people who were "Always," "Sometimes" and "Maybe" there for Paula. Paula's completed map showed the apartment complex constituted a supportive community for her, so helping Paula stay near

thoughts, giving Huddlers the opportunity to weigh in. For more information, please email [Andrea!](#)

Our October Huddle featured a conversation on how to help renter hosts who may be facing a lease violation because they're hosting. And PhD student Mallory VanMeeter presented her preliminary research on various host-home models, ranging from programs that match strangers to programs that boost youth connections with "natural supports"—adults already in the youth's network.

A big thanks to the Sauer Family Foundation for underwriting CloseKnit's Huddles in 2019!

To get on the list for future Huddles, please email [Jacqueline](#).

Are You a Passionate Person?

. . . who understands how to ignite system change, build new programs, balance a budget, and raise money?

Then email [Aaron Zimmerman](#) to learn more about joining the CloseKnit board, or [click here](#) [asking Aaron to create a link] to get more information.

We're Grateful . . .

The Greater Minnesota Housing Fund has awarded CloseKnit our fourth \$10,000 grant. Consistent funders mean the world to us! The prevalence of youth

her support system—and her new job at a fast-food restaurant—became an obvious priority. Paula identified another neighbor, “Anna,” as an option, but as someone on a fixed income, Anna would need financial support in order to host. And, as a renter, Anna would need to inform her landlord. Although he initially objected, after Brenda explained she'd be available to mediate any complaints, the landlord agreed.

Brenda then met with Anna and Paula to create the “Shared Expectations Hosting Agreement,” a strength-based contract that describes how Paula can contribute to the household, establishes house rules, and divvies up the \$200 monthly stipend HOPE Home arrangements can receive.

With that financial help and Brenda's case management, Paula was able live in a [HOPE Home](#) with a community adult!

To Ease Reentry, Help the Hosts Who Offer Their Couches

We're so pleased that Dr Stacey Ault is co-author of the research paper based on CloseKnit's interviews with youth facing homelessness and informal hosts. “Beyond a Bed: Supportive Connections Forged Between Youth Who Are Couch Hopping and Adult Hosts” was recently submitted to a peer-reviewed journal for publication.



Here's Dr Ault's recent article in Youth Today describing both her personal experience as a host and her professional perspective:

When Carlos first came to live with us, he was about 16. A friend of my son's, he had a long history of family and housing instability and had been recently kicked out by his mom. As his informal host, I thought I did everything “right.” We already had a strong relationship; I met with his mom, laid out house rules and talked about his plans for the future. . . .

I engaged with Carlos the way I engage with most youth—as a black mama. I cared deeply and did what I could to provide him the best type of support. In addition to being Mama Stacey, I am also a scholar, a researcher, a social worker and an advocate. All these identities didn't enable me to wave a magic wand and transform life for Carlos. They also didn't totally equip me to navigate the

homelessness is fairly consistent across urban and rural areas; however, being homeless in a rural area can be especially challenging, given the lack of transit and scarcity of social services. Our funding from GMHF helps us provide outreach statewide.



Champion Love & Give to the Max!

The annual statewide charitable-giving program is set for November 14, but you can begin giving anytime.

To donate to CloseKnit through GiveMN, please click [here](#).

Because GiveMN charges a 6.9% processing fee, some folks prefer to give online to CloseKnit through our fiscal sponsor, Propel Nonprofits, which charges a 2.2% fee + 30¢ per transaction. [Click here to donate through Propel.](#)

Or be old school, and write a check. Kindly make checks payable to "Propel Nonprofits" with "CloseKnit" in the memo line and mail to:
Propel Nonprofits
One Main St SE, Suite 600
Minneapolis, MN 55414

All donations are fully tax-deductible.

complexities of youth homelessness as it intersects with the criminal justice system. Even if I knew "what" to do, it didn't mean I had the internal and external resources to do it. . . .

To read Dr Ault's complete column in Youth Today, click [here](#).

We've Been Spreading the Word!



CloseKnit executive director *Jacqueline White (left)* presented at the Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless Conference in Rochester in September with the rockin' team from [Open Doors for Youth](#) in Elk River (left to right): executive director *Cindy Ley*, case manager *Jen Gunderson*, and youth consultant *Kenna*.

In the last few months, CloseKnit executive director Jacqueline White also presented our work at:

- National Association for Ending Homeless-ness conference, Washington DC, and
- Minnesota Indian Housing Conference, Treasure Island Casino, MN.

Lead researcher Dr. Susanna Curry presented at:

- Society for the Study of Social Problems annual meeting, NYC, and
- Council on Social Work Education Annual Program Meeting, Denver, CO.

Researcher Mallory VanMeeter presented at:

- Point Source Youth conference, NYC.

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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