



**22,000 youth are  
homeless in Minnesota  
every year.<sup>1</sup>**

*join the movement to end youth homelessness*

**Host a House Party Jan. 21 for  
*Homeless Youth: Finding Home***



**100 House Parties will be hosted January 21 to view  
*Homeless Youth: Finding Home*, engage new supporters,  
and build greater momentum to end all youth homelessness in Minnesota.**

**The following is a simple guide on  
“How to Host a Viewing House Party,” accomplished in 4 easy steps.**

**Step 1:** Review the house party items in this tool kit. Share your plans (and any questions) and together we will host 100+ house parties on this important night. Please contact Kirsten at [kanderso@lssmn.org](mailto:kanderso@lssmn.org) or 651.969.2354 for additional information and a copy of the *Homeless Youth: Finding Home* DVD.

**Step 2:** Identify where you will host the viewing. The documentary is thirty minutes long. We recommend events last at least an hour to provide opportunity for discussion and action.

**Step 3:** Invite and Promote!

- Be creative! Think of inviting people from your office, church, allied organizations, elected officials, and your larger community.

**Step 4:** Host the House Party. Carefully read through materials provided below so you will feel equipped to direct activities and reference questions. Most importantly, encourage your guests to join this important movement and:

- Send e-mails and postcards to legislators sharing end youth homelessness is important.
- Sign-up to receive action alerts and be part of this growing movement.

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<sup>1</sup> Minnesota Department of Human Services. (February, 2007) *Report to the Legislature: Runaway and Homeless Youth in Minnesota.*

# Homeless Youth in Minnesota: a Snapshot



*"I couchdopped for two years in Rochester and what hurt most of all is that my parents knew I didn't have any place that was safe."* Derek, 18, is now in Minneapolis and has been homeless since he was 14.

## Homeless Youth Numbers:

An estimated 550-650 youth age 11 to 17 experience homelessness nightly. In addition, there are an estimated number of 700 to 1,650 young adults ages 18-21 who experience homelessness nightly.

## Homeless Youth Demographics:

- The average age youth become homeless is 16.
- 54% of homeless youth are from greater Minnesota.
- 88% of homeless youth are enrolled in school.
- 13% of homeless youth have children

## Challenges Faced by Homeless Youth:

- 53% of homeless youth have been physically abused.
- 36% have been told by a medical professional in the last 2 years that they have a serious mental health problem.
- 39% of girls report being sexually abused.
- 14% have traded sex for food, money, shelter, clothing, and other essential items.

## Homeless Youth Experience in Out-of-Home Placement:

- 70% of homeless youth and young adults experienced a placement in a foster home, group home, treatment center, or correctional facility
- 2 out of 5 homeless young people had lived in a foster home
- 1 and 3 homeless young people had run away from a placement

## **Discussion Guide**

### ***Homeless Youth: Finding Home***

*Homeless Youth: Finding Home* shares some stories of homeless youth, how they are managing their situations, and what they hope to achieve. Below are some questions for you to use as you help prompt reaction, elicit questions and guide discussion.

#### **Before viewing:**

1. What do you know about youth homelessness?
2. What are some of the stereotypes of youth homelessness?
3. How does youth homelessness affect you or your family?

#### **After viewing:**

1. How do you feel after watching the film?
2. What in the film surprised you? Why?
3. What did you learn about youth homelessness?
4. How did the film change your ideas or attitudes about homeless youth? Why?
5. How did you connect with the stories in the video?
6. Are there any similarities between you and any of the youth in the video? Are there any differences between you and any of the youth in the video?
7. What were some of the reasons why youth became homeless? What other reasons might contribute to youth homelessness, not mentioned in the video?
8. What did we learn about how the youth in the documentary were able to cope? What kept them going? What gave them inspiration & hope?
9. What types of services are available to homeless youth? What are some of the challenges of assuring homeless youth receive the supports they need?
10. What can you do to help homeless youth – through volunteerism, giving or advocacy?

# Youth Moving Forward Talking Points

Youth Moving Forward: Working Together to Ensure Stability, Opportunity & Connection



**Support the Youth Moving Forward Agenda  
to end youth homelessness**

**Intervention** – Permanent funding for the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act.

An estimated 22,410 unaccompanied youth are runaway or homeless each year in Minnesota. (Wilder Research)

- Half of the total homeless population in MN are children or youth 21 or younger
- 29% slept outside at least one night in October 2006
- 54% homeless youth 17 and under are from greater Minnesota
- 88% homeless youth 17 & younger are enrolled in school

**↓ Make the Connection- Homeless Youth and Youth Aging Out of Care ↓**

70% of Minnesota's homeless youth report previous experience in a foster home, group home, treatment center, or correctional facility.

**Youth need support to transition to a stable independence.**

**Prevention** – Positive transitions for youth aging out of care across Minnesota.

- **Automatic Enrollment in Medical Assistance** and continuous coverage up to age 21 for youth aging out. - Many youth have no health care after exiting the foster care system and are unable to enroll because of barriers (moving around, inability to verify employment, etc.).
- **“Re-entry” for supports or services option for youth up to age 21** - Youth aging out may need future support. Less than 10% of 18 year olds live on their own and 95% of Americans are 25 or older before they are able to live self-sufficiently.
- **Access to driver's education and training leading to a MN driver's license** - Youth in foster care may not be covered under their foster parent's car insurance policy and are unable to practice the skills needed to get a state driver's licenses.
- **Asset disregard** – Preserve assets youth may have acquired through a trust (passing of a parent or tribal benefits) so the youth can transition to adulthood with greater financial stability.
- **Greater access to higher education** – Clear process for homeless or youth who age out to apply for financial aid, and assure they have a place to live during school breaks.

Youth Moving Forward is a nonpartisan coalition that is not affiliated with any candidate or political party.

# **Youth Moving Forward – Endorsement Form\***

Working Together to Ensure Stability, Opportunity & Connection.

[www.youthmovingforward.org](http://www.youthmovingforward.org)

**I/My Organization supports:**

- Securing additional funding for the Minnesota Runaway and Homeless Youth Act!**
- Supporting the “Ready to Launch” effort, easing the transition of youth aging out of foster care!**

**Please list me/my organization as an endorser of the Youth Moving Forward effort!**

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ORGANIZATION:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**TELEPHONE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**EMAIL:** \_\_\_\_\_



## Youth Moving Forward: Sample Letter

Your Name  
Address

Representative or Senator's Name  
Address

Date

Dear Representative/Senator Last name;

Minnesota youth need your on-going support to prevent and end youth homelessness. You can do this by supporting the Youth Moving Forward agenda in 2009.

With an estimated 22,410 unaccompanied youth who face some form of homelessness each year in Minnesota - over 70% who have been in out of home placement, (foster care, group homes, treatment centers, or community-based corrections) it is clear that Minnesota must improve our systems and our safety net for youth in transition. I am writing to seek your support for the Youth Moving Forward initiative that will:

- fund the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act continuum of services to intervene when youth become homeless
- provide medical assistance up to age 21 for youth who age out of care
- allow access to services up to age 21 for youth who age out of care

Please be a voice for assuring that all youth have stability, opportunity and connection. Advancing the Youth Moving Forward agenda will make an important difference for youth and help Minnesota come closer to ending all youth homelessness. For more information on this important act, please contact Kirsten Anderson-Stembridge at 651.969.2354 or [kanderso@lssmn.org](mailto:kanderso@lssmn.org).

Thank you for your leadership.

Sincerely,

Your Name