

Heading Home St. Louis County

December 2009 Newsletter

A Progress Report on Ending Homelessness in St. Louis County

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Greetings!

The Heading Home Newsletter was created as a way to continually update those who have an interest in and/or play a crucial part in St. Louis County's Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness. Each issue will feature articles and updates about key events and issues affecting the progress of this initiative.

Please feel free to forward this Newsletter to any of your contacts and encourage them to join our mailing list.

Thank you for your continued support of St. Louis County's Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness.

Heading Home St. Louis County Retreat Celebration of Successes and Mid-Course Correction

The Evaluation Committee is working with the Implementation Team to develop a half-day retreat for all people participating in the 10 Year Plan. The date and place for the retreat is expected to be finalized by the Implementation Team during their January 28th meeting.

The purpose of the retreat is to engage the Implementation Team and the members of all 10 Year Plan committees in a short-term strategic planning process focused on celebrating successes and making needed mid-course corrections to the Plan. This will include revising benchmarks, strategies and activities, where needed, to achieve the Plan's major goals and to

strengthen the evaluation plan.

Check your email -more information in January!

Plan on attending~



Ground Breaking!

AEOA Youth Foyer Construction Underway

A crowd of over 50 people joined AEOA Executive Director Harlan Tardy, Housing Services Director Dana Hiltunen, Mayor Steve Peterson, County Commissioner Keith Nelson, State Senator David Tomassoni, and Jerry Fallos from US Senator Klobuchar's office for a ground breaking ceremony for the Virginia Youth Foyer in early December. A supportive housing development, The Virginia Youth Foyer will provide young people at-risk with stable housing and the tools they need for successful independent living. In his remarks, Harlan said, "It is very cold today, and that should remind us of how lucky we are to have warm homes and supportive families. For too many, that isn't so. In a year's time, AEOA has worked with over 100 young people between the ages of 16-21 with no where to live. Ninety-five percent (95%) of them were young people from the Iron

Range"

AEOA would like to extend special thanks to the many partners who worked with us in planning for this facility. Those partners include Range Mental Health Center; Arrowhead Center; Range Transitional Housing; St. Louis County; the Virginia Housing and Redevelopment Authority; the City of Virginia; the Virginia Ministerial Association; Lutheran Social Services; Bois Forte Homeless Services; Northern State Bank; the Minnesota Office of Economic Opportunity; the Coalition for the Homeless; Minnesota Housing Finance Agency; Greater Minnesota Housing Fund; Federal Home Loan Bank; Mardag Foundation; Open Your Heart to the Hungry & Homeless and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Northern St. Louis County Community Connect

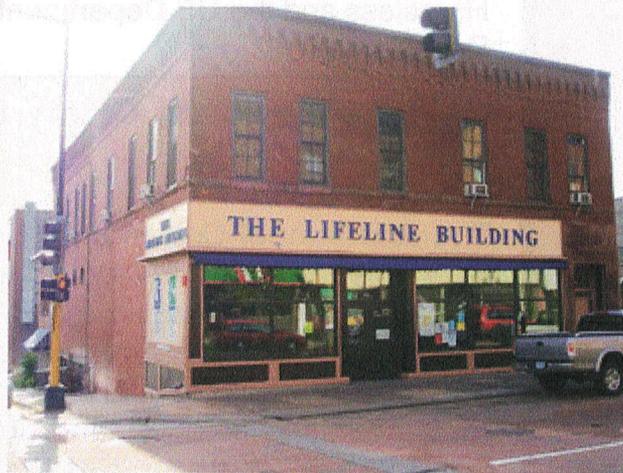
The first annual Community Connect in Northern St. Louis County, held October 22, 2009, proved to be a very worthwhile event for all involved. The coordination committee for this event would like to extend our sincere thanks to the many individuals, businesses and organizations in our "Iron Range" communities that assisted with the northern St. Louis County Community Connect event. We extend our thanks to both Hibbing & Virginia Community Colleges, the City of Virginia, our non-profit organizations, our faith based communities, also to those who volunteered and made donations to make this event a success.

By forming partnerships with those in our communities the event served over 165 families. The purpose of this event was to "connect" those in need with services that could assist them in these tough economic times. The median age of all whom attended was 34 according to our intake surveys.

We had numerous non-profit providers at the

event on hand to answer questions, distribute information, and to set appointments for their services. There were positive comments from the clients who attended the event. Many of the exhibitors/providers stated that they had success in reaching the right "target audience" of clients. All of our donated items that included food, personal hygiene and home products went to those in need! We also had high numbers for those who took surveys which will help us attain funding to further

News from Life House



By Jeff Woolverton, Life House

Life House hosted Duluth's second Youth Connect! on Thursday, October 22, 1pm-8pm, at the Life House Youth Center (102 West First Street, downtown Duluth). The event, a part of the area's 4th Project Homeless Connect, combined Life House supportive youth services with partnering agencies across the region. This Youth Connect! event was held in conjunction with the 2009 state-wide Wilder survey, conducted every three years to better understand the causes, circumstances, and effects of homelessness in Minnesota.

Life House opened in 1992, providing street outreach to Duluth homeless teens. At Life House, efforts are made to help at-risk youth ages 14-20 break the cycles of poverty, homelessness, and abuse by offering on-site access to basic needs and supportive services in housing, education, employment, and health. In Duluth, homeless kids know that Life House is a place they can go to get off the streets, talk with a positive adult, and receive respect and support in a safe, drug and alcohol-free environment.

Today, Life House is the only drop-in center for homeless kids in Greater Minnesota.

"Homelessness in our community is a real issue," said Michelle Simmonds, Life House Housing Program Manager. "As we sleep in our houses each night, more than 100-150 teenagers and children in our city have no place to call home. We forget homelessness spans all age groups, ethnicities and genders."

"Homeless kids face more challenges than simply not having a roof over their heads," added Leon Boykin, Life House Case Manager. "Events like this can make a real and positive difference for those simply in need of a helping hand. In Duluth...everyone matters."

Life House's 2009 Youth Connect! event was aimed at assisting Duluth youth in achieving safe and affordable housing, and economic self-sufficiency - key goals of the "Heading Home St. Louis County - Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness Committee."

**Thank you all for your continued
hard work on ending homelessness
in St. Louis County!!!!**

