

# Perspectives



MINNESOTA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

What's your vision?

Supporting donors and communities in creating their individual approaches to philanthropy

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## A Place to Call Home

*SHELTER—A BASIC NEED MOST OF US PROBABLY TAKE FOR GRANTED. BUT MANY INDIVIDUALS IN OUR STATE ARE STRUGGLING DAILY TO FIND A PLACE TO LIVE. THE STATISTICS ARE TELLING: ON ANY GIVEN NIGHT, MORE THAN 9,000 ADULTS, YOUTH AND CHILDREN ARE HOMELESS IN MINNESOTA. TWENTY-EIGHT PERCENT OF HOMELESS ADULTS ARE WORKING. NEARLY ONE-QUARTER OF HOMELESS ADULTS WERE HOMELESS AS CHILDREN. THANKFULLY MANY MINNESOTANS ARE WORKING TO COMBAT THIS PROBLEM—INCLUDING THE INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES AND ORGANIZATIONS WHO PARTNER WITH US AT MINNESOTA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION. THANKS TO DONORS LIKE YOU, EVERY DAY MORE INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES ARE FINDING A PLACE TO CALL HOME.*



*Families celebrate together at Camden Apartments, a facility in North Minneapolis for families who have histories of homelessness.*

## Coordinating Efforts to End Homelessness

End the cycle of homelessness in our state—that is the goal of Heading Home Minnesota. An unprecedented public-private partnership, this initiative encompasses innovative coordinated efforts in the public, business, nonprofit, faith and philanthropic sectors.

Heading Home Minnesota integrates the strategies of several existing initiatives—Minnesota's Business Plan to End Long-Term Homelessness (which was established by the state legislature in 2004) and seven regional Heading Home programs (in Hennepin, Ramsey, Olmsted and St. Louis counties, as well as central, southwest and southeast Minnesota).

Former Minnesota Housing Finance Agency Commissioner Kit Hadley is Heading Home Minnesota's executive director. Carleen Rhodes, president and CEO of Minnesota Community Foundation and The Saint Paul Foundation, is serving as steering committee co-chair along with James Frey, president and CEO of Frey Foundation.

The initiative emphasizes three main strategies: housing, prevention and outreach, with efforts in each of these areas tailored to address local community circumstances. The housing component concentrates on the creation of supportive housing units that will include mental health services, job training and child care—all services designed to help people stabilize and improve their lives.

“The state has a goal of creating 4,000 new supportive housing units by 2010. We are currently more than halfway to that goal, with people placed in 2,068 housing units so far,” says Kit.

The prevention component of the program concentrates on providing stop-gap assistance and discharge initiatives to prevent people from becoming homeless. Stop-gap assistance may be utilized if an individual loses his or her job and needs temporary assistance to pay for and stay in stable housing. Discharge initiatives are for individuals who are leaving an institution—be it foster care, treatment or correctional—and need a plan to readjust to the community.

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## Dear Friends,



These have been difficult weeks for our country and communities as we begin to see the effects of the current economic crisis. Little did

any of us know or expect the scope and magnitude of the challenges we now face. The ability to meet basic needs is becoming increasingly difficult for people all over Minnesota.

Thankfully, though, resources are being combined and efforts intensified in at least one area of basic needs—shelter. In this issue we share with you how individuals and organizations across our state are partnering with Minnesota Community Foundation to combat homelessness, increase access to affordable housing and give people a place to call home.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carleen K. Rhodes".


Carleen K. Rhodes  
President and CEO

## Home, *continued from page 1*

The outreach component of Heading Home Minnesota concentrates on working with homeless youth and adults currently on the streets. This involves a coordinated system to respond to the needs of those individuals, including increased access to primary health care and mental health services. Outreach will also focus on decriminalizing homelessness and therefore allowing police officers to focus on community safety.

“Homelessness affects so many of the priorities we have for the future,” says Kit. “For example, we all agree about the importance of student achievement. But we know that learning is undermined by homelessness and, although there are exceptions, most students will not succeed without stable housing.”

Heading Home Minnesota is aiming to help families or individuals who have been homeless for more than a year or who have been homeless on a recurring basis. Kit feels very optimistic about this goal.


“The good news is that we do have the capacity to solve this problem,” says Kit. “And our success in this effort will impact not only the vitality of our future as a community but the vitality of each family and individual in Minnesota.” 

## Donors Collaborating to Make a Difference

“I knew there were housing needs in this part of Minnesota, so I decided to provide an avenue for funding part of the gap,” says Keith Hein, advisor to the Chippewa County Area Affordable Housing Fund, a Donor Advised Fund of Minnesota Community Foundation.

In 2000, Keith began working with Habitat for Humanity to start a chapter for his community. But Keith knew he couldn’t address this problem on his own. So he set up the Fund and then approached five other community members who agreed to help him fill this need.

The group of donors has been contributing to the Fund for almost eight years, and their mission is to help rehabilitate existing homes and build new homes in the area. So far this Habitat chapter has provided 13 new or rebuilt homes in Chippewa County, impacting the lives of several area families.

“The change for these families is significant,” says Keith. “The value in their ability to live in a decent, affordable home and have a stable life is substantial. I hope and want to continue this Fund so that we can keep making a difference for others in our community.” 

## FYI – New Legislation

The Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008 has created a special charitable giving opportunity for individuals who have saved diligently for retirement and now have the good fortune to be able to give back to the community. Seniors who are 70½ or older can make the gift of a lifetime—by giving a portion of their individual retirement accounts (IRAs) to charity, tax-free. This new legislation applies to distributions made throughout both 2008 and 2009. Please contact your donor relations officer or community fund specialist for more information.

## Investing in Basic Needs


The suburbs of the Twin Cities are not usually a place that comes to mind when one hears about homelessness—but that doesn't mean the issue doesn't exist there.

Interfaith Outreach & Community Partners (IOCP) knows this, which is why they opened their doors nearly 30 years ago. A nonprofit organization, IOCP serves Hamel, Long Lake, Medicine Lake, Medina, Minnetonka Beach, Orono, Plymouth and Wayzata by creating opportunities that change lives.

“People everywhere are struggling,” says donor advisor Julie Steiner. “It’s costing more money just to meet your basic needs. The inflationary cost of living is putting people right at the edge of homelessness.”

That is one reason she and her family support IOCP through their Donor Advised Fund, The Jackley Family Fund of Minnesota Community Foundation.

IOCP offers both emergency housing assistance and long-term housing solutions, and works to preserve and develop safe, stable, healthy neighborhoods. The organization responds to housing crises, prevents homelessness and intervenes to prevent foreclosure or loss of homes.

“There are many families in our community who are just one crisis away from being homeless,” says Julie. “So IOCP is a major blessing in our community, and we will continue to support their good work.” 



Fourteen-year-old Peter Larson raised more than \$50,000 in 2007 during IOCP's Sleep Out, a fundraiser to end homelessness.

## Improving Housing, Improving Lives

**“If I can do this, anyone can.  
I wouldn't own a home without them.”**

—AEOA homeownership graduate Marcene D.



*This northern Minnesota home was purchased and renovated by AEOA, then sold with 0% interest to a first-time homebuyer.*

Marcene represents just one life touched by the housing programs at Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency (AEOA), located in northeastern Minnesota. Serving seven counties in the Arrowhead region, the agency's mission is to strengthen communities by providing opportunities for people experiencing social and economic challenges.

Chisholm Community Foundation and Hibbing Foundation, Community Funds of Minnesota Community Foundation, have supported AEOA through their grantmaking programs.

“People deserve a safe and quality home as a base,” says Lorrie Janatopoulos, planning director at AEOA. “If we really want to have the talents of everyone in our community available for the better good, then we need to provide people with a safe place to live.”

So the housing department at AEOA helps people to meet this most basic need through several programs. Energy assistance provides financial aid to low-income households to help prevent utility disconnects or to help upgrade a furnace to a more cost-efficient model. Homeless prevention services help individuals and families keep their current housing or find more stable housing through outreach, financial assistance and counseling.

The homeownership program is where Marcene received education, counseling and financial assistance to purchase her home—and the program has made all the difference for her and her three boys.

**Improving, continued on page 4**

# A Community Comes Together

“It’s as simple as wanting to help people,” says Roger Ashland, board chairman of Habitat for Humanity of the Steele-Waseca Area. When Roger and another community member noticed a need for affordable housing in their area, they decided to set up a local chapter of Habitat for Humanity this year.

What started as a seed of an idea with a couple of individuals quickly grew into a community collaboration. One of the first steps was to fund the initiative, and some of the funding for this effort came from the E. F. Johnson Foundation, a Community Fund with Minnesota Community Foundation and part of the Waseca Area Foundation Family of Funds.

Once the Habitat for Humanity chapter was up and running, organizational meetings were held in the community. At one of the earliest meetings, a Waseca couple came forth. They were moving and, instead of selling their current home, they decided to donate it to the initiative.

The donated home is currently being renovated and should be ready for occupancy by year’s end. A local single mom and her two elementary-aged children are set to move in. “The family is very excited,” says Roger, “They will have a stable place to live every day—a place for the kids to call home.”

In addition to providing much-needed affordable housing, the experience has also been a real community builder. “Between those serving on committees and those working on the house, there have been more than 100 people involved in this first project so far,” says Roger. “People have really gotten to know each other, and we have built some very strong community ties.”

And the community is just getting started. The city of Waseca has donated some land, and there are plans to break ground on new construction for affordable housing next spring. It seems everyone agrees with Roger when he says: “To be able to have your own home is a pretty neat thing.”

## Improving, continued from page 3

“Everything about having my own home has been wonderful for my family,” says Marcene. “The boys are not embarrassed to have friends over. We can finally have pets. I don’t have to wait until morning to call the landlord with a problem. I can pound a nail in the wall, and the boys can choose the colors they want their rooms painted.”

AEOA’s housing services also provide assistance with foreclosure prevention, weatherization, housing development and housing rehabilitation. The aim of all of these programs is to make affordable housing attainable, something that Lorrie believes is crucial.

“People are just going to do better in quality, affordable housing,” she says, “and so then the community is going to do better.”

## The Foundation congratulates:

- Donna Dalton on her promotion to director of development initiatives
- Colin Gordon on his promotion to general accountant

## The Foundation welcomes:

- Yer Chang, program assistant for scholarships
- Patricia O’Brien, director of human resources
- Julie Umhauer, administrative assistant for grants and program
- Sophia Vazquez, administrative assistant for development



Community members work together to renovate the first home for Habitat for Humanity of the Steele-Waseca Area.

## Perspectives

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