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**MEDIA ALERT: PHOTO OPPORTUNITY
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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HOPE 4 Youth Opening the Doors of HOPE Place

The first homeless young people will have a home for the Holidays

- WHAT:** HOPE 4 Youth is bringing the first homeless young people home for the Holidays to HOPE Place, our new transitional housing located in Coon Rapids. The young people, ages 18-25, will call HOPE Place home for an average of 12-24 months while they work to leave their status of homeless in the past and have a brighter future in place, one where they are independent, healthy, employed, housed adults.
- WHO:** The public is invited to attend the Community Open House and Ribbon Cutting.
- WHEN:** **Monday, December 5, 2016**
2-6 p.m.; Ribbon Cutting at 4:15 p.m.
- WHERE:** **HOPE Place**
80 Coon Rapids Blvd.
Coon Rapids, MN 55448
- WHY:** In October 2015, the City of Coon Rapids positioned HOPE 4 Youth one-step closer to our long-term goal of ending youth homelessness in the north metro by approving our request to reconstruct the former Stage Door Dance Studio into transitional housing, HOPE Place. We had spent too many nights watching the young people leave the Drop-In Center at 7 p.m. to head back onto the streets and knew that there was a dire need for long-term housing. It took a village to bring the first young people, 12 at any one time, “home” to HOPE Place – HOPE 4 Youth staff, board and volunteers, community partners and donors – and words cannot accurately thank them for the difference that they are going to make in the young peoples’ lives that have the opportunity to live there.

In June, we launched a Capital Campaign to raise \$850,000 to create 12 studio apartments, a community room, offices, a laundry room, a study, and a fitness center. Many individuals, civic groups, churches, businesses and foundations came together to see this project through. The Pohlad Family Foundation believed enough in this project to give a \$100,000 matching grant and the community responded to that match. Many others came through with new, donated items, such as Slumberland donating the 12 beds. Most of our construction partners offered discounts on their products and services, including Village Floor and Walters Recycling, to name a few. For a complete list, visit our website at www.hope4youthmn.org.

HOPE 4 Youth is also partnering with two organizations who have years of experience with transitional housing, YouthLink and CommonBond. YouthLink has hired an onsite Case Manager for HOPE Place to help the youth work through their daily needs. Their transitional living programming has a proven track record of moving youth to become successful adults so we knew that they would help us provide the best for the young people. CommonBond is overseeing the property and will ensure that the building is running smoothly.

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Additionally, the Anoka County Workforce Center will have a staff member on-site at HOPE Place two half days a week, working on career-building for each of the young people. The goal is that they find a path to success through a career they will love and thrive in.

HOPE 4 Youth cannot wait for the young people to finally have a place to call home, something many of them may not have had for a long-time, if ever.

About HOPE 4 Youth

*HOPE 4 Youth, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization located in Anoka, Minnesota, serves homeless youth by meeting basic needs, as well as helping them find jobs, finish school, secure housing, and access on-site health and wellness services. The Drop-In Center is open Monday – Friday, 2p.m.–7p.m. **Mission:** providing pathways to end youth homelessness. **Vision:** that all youth feel safe, valued, and supported while reaching their full potential. This begins with meeting their basic needs and leads to giving them the tools and resources to thrive. For more information, please visit HOPE4YouthMN.org or contact Kristin VanHeel at kvanheel@hope4youthmn.org.*

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