



10 Ways 10 Days

Invest In Minnesota's Future

9th Way

Invest in Services for Homeless Youth

Erich Lutz has worked with youth experiencing homelessness in Duluth for 13 years.

The young people walking through his doors at Life House don't have any other options.

"Many come from unsafe homes and face circumstances beyond their control," he says. "They are forced to grow up without anyone to show them how."

Youth come to Life House's drop-in center simply to survive — they need shelter, food and clean clothes. Along with those necessities, they also get encouragement, learn to trust and begin to heal.

"They have experienced trauma," Erich says. "Adults in their lives have taken advantage of them or abandoned them. We teach them a lot of things: how to balance a checkbook, do laundry, and make doctor's appointments. But most importantly, we teach them that they're worth something and that someone cares enough to be there even if they make a mistake."

Erich has seen youth achieve great things after receiving help. One former resident was kicked out of her home by her abusive stepfather and mentally ill mother. She crashed on couches and under bridges until she found Life House. She recalls, "I knew it was a safe place where I could get help without fearing judgment. I was ashamed of what I'd done to survive, but Life House helped me pick up the pieces. With their help, I enrolled in college, got a job and established permanent housing."

Today she is leading a healthy, happy life and has dedicated her career to helping youth with similar experiences.

In 2012, at least 1,151 unaccompanied youth were homeless in Minnesota on a single night. But state investments in services like those provided by Life House will make sure they get the help they need to lead healthy, happy lives and contribute to their communities.

For more information about this story, contact Erich Lutz at 218-349-3625.

For more information about 10 Ways In 10 Days and Invest in Minnesota, contact Leah Gardner at 651-757-3063 or visit our website at www.investinmn.org.



All Minnesotans benefit when we invest in our communities.

With fair and adequate revenues, we can invest in housing for youth, support our schools and colleges, maintain our roads and bridges, and provide care and dignity to our senior citizens and people with disabilities.

After a decade of deep budget cuts, it's time to raise revenues fairly in order to move our state forward and invest in prosperity for all Minnesotans.

Invest in Minnesota is a coalition of faith, labor and nonprofit organizations united to support revenue raised fairly to invest in Minnesota's future.

