

House of Refuge Outreach Programs

AGENCY INFORMATION

MISSION:

House of Refuge promotes the strengths and abilities of youth and families by providing community-based services that empower, encourage and enrich each individual to face life's challenges with confidence, competence and dignity.

VISION:

Compassion - We care for all we serve as if they were our own, helping them to pursue positive choices and opportunities to thrive.

Impact - We better the lives of youth and families by providing positive, inspiring programs that make a difference, now and in the future.

Diversity - We embrace the differences of every youth, family and community we serve with an inclusive nature and diverse staff.

Perseverance - We commit to building the capabilities of all youth and families regardless of circumstance, to overcome challenges and achieve success.

Collaboration - We rely on our staff, communities, supporters, funders and partner agencies to help shape the success of our youth and families.

OVERALL GOALS

1. To provide educational, recreational, cultural, health, wellness, job-training, and lifelong learning opportunities for youth and adults.
2. To offer educational advancement opportunities for youth, young adults and seniors.
3. To ensure that no one in the Minneapolis-St. Paul communities go hungry.
4. To provide job training skills for our youth, young adults and those who have recently returned from prison, to become successfully employed.
5. To successfully recruit, train, and retain more women in quality pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs, and pursue careers in manufacturing, infrastructure, construction, cybersecurity, and healthcare, among other industries.
6. To provide a quality mentorship program for young boys and girls in the urban community to broaden their horizon on achieving what seems impossible.
7. To provide "Another Chance" Re-entry Program for ex-offenders so they become productive citizens after incarceration.

PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

ASK – AfterSchool Kids Program

Our AfterSchool Kids Program provides an active school environment for students after a long day at school. Our rooms are specially designed with a large school-aged in mind. Although our program is structured, students have time to spend with their friends. Students report to their age-specific area to visit with friends and engage in activities. Students then rotate through our Specialty Enrichment Classrooms, which will focus on Physical Development & Health, Language/Literacy, Mathematics, Science/Social Studies, Social-Emotional, Creative Arts, Robotics, and Engineering.

Multimedia Design for Youth

Our Multimedia Design Youth Media Program teaches youth media making and career readiness skills, while they volunteer as media artists. The program is comprised of two components: the Summer Media Institute and the School Year Production Program.

The Multimedia Design Youth Media Program will explore filmmaking, YouTube Videos and short movies with students. During the School Year Production Program, youth participants will create a short movie depicting their life experiences.

During the Summer Media Institute students will explore issues of cultural change using immersive media technologies. These videos will be available to be viewed online through social media platforms. The Youth Media Program is dedicated to ensuring our young people have access to high quality instruction and technology related to new and emerging media arts fields.

We're excited to be paving the way with youth produced immersive media and can't wait to see what our young people will produce next!

Adult GED-BACK TO SCHOOL PROGRAM

Teachers assist individuals in preparing for the four GED tests: Reading/Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, and Science. Teaching methods include small group instruction, independent study, and computer-based instruction.

Individuals interested in attending classes for GED preparation must attend an orientation prior to registering. Classroom registration is by appointment once orientation has been completed.

Online Preparation - As an extra help for our in-class lessons, students are offered online programs to help them prepare for the GED tests -- from anywhere they have computer access to the internet. Students can study at the time and place that suits their schedule.

FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM

The Family Literacy Program provides opportunities for parents and their children ages 3 months through 5 years old to attend school together.

Parents work on earning a GED or diploma, improving their academic skills, or learning English. In addition, parenting classes, parent/child interactive literacy time, and preschool literacy activities are included.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM

Throughout most of U.S. history, American high school students were routinely taught vocational and job-ready skills along with the three Rs: reading, writing, and arithmetic. Indeed readers of a certain age are likely to have fond memories of huddling over wooden workbenches learning a craft such as woodwork or maybe metal work, or any one of the hands-on projects that characterized the once-ubiquitous shop class.

But in the 1950s, a different philosophy emerged: the theory that students should follow separate educational tracks according to ability. The idea was that the college-bound would take traditional academic courses (Latin, creative writing, science, math) and received no vocational training. Those students not headed for college would take basic academic courses, along with vocational training, or “shop.”

Ability tracking did not sit well with educators or parents, who believed students were assigned to tracks not by aptitude, but by socio-economic status and race. The result being that by the end of the 1950s, what was once a perfectly respectable, even mainstream educational path came to be viewed as a remedial track that restricted minority and working-class students.

The backlash against tracking, however, did not bring vocational education back to the academic core. Instead, the focus shifted to preparing all students for college, and college prep is still the center of the U.S. high school curriculum.

So what's the harm in prepping kids for college? Won't all students benefit from a high-level, four-year academic degree program? As it turns out, not really. For one thing, people have a huge and diverse range of different skills and learning styles. Not everyone is good at math, biology, history and other traditional subjects that characterize college-level work. Not everyone is fascinated by Greek mythology, or enamored with Victorian literature, or enraptured by classical music. Some students are mechanical; others are artistic. Some focus best in a lecture hall or classroom; still, others learn best by doing and would thrive in the studio, workshop or shop floor.

And not everyone goes to college. The latest figures from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) show that about 68% of high school students attend college. That means over 30% graduate with neither academic nor job skills.

But even the 68% aren't doing so well. Almost 40% of students who begin four-year college programs don't complete them, which translates into a whole lot of wasted time, wasted money, and burdensome student loan debt. Of those who do finish college, one-third or more will end up in jobs they could have had without a four-year degree. The BLS found that 37% of currently employed college grads are doing work for which only a high school degree is required.

Our Vocational Training program will provide resources and training for careers in manufacturing, healthcare, construction, power utility, garden and landscaping, electrical & electrical engineering technology, boilermakers, aviation, electrician, plumber, CNC machinery & manufacturing, among others. Each student will leave the program with union representation, job training, and a career, which will provide them a livable wage.

CAREER & COMPUTER CENTER

The House of Refuge Career & Computer Center is committed to ensuring underserved individuals have equal opportunity to access technology for life-long learning, career search, and personal and community empowerment. As the digital divide becomes less about access to computers and more about a culture of use and understanding, the Career & Computer Center offers online resources that advance financial education, individual asset-building and workforce development opportunities.

- Online Financial Education Resources
- Computer Literacy skills for youth, adults and seniors
- Online Communicating Strategies
- Workforce Development Online Tools & Resources
- Community Resources Online

With a focus to support community and economic development, the Technology Center is a place where people can access computers and the Internet to gather information, create, learn and communicate with others while they develop essential skills to achieve self-sufficiency and economic mobility.

ANOTHER CHANCE RE-ENTRY PROGRAM

Another Chance Re-entry Program provides men and women with transitional housing with an emphasis on spiritual, physical, emotional and cognitive growth. Another Chance prepares men and women for employment and living a productive lifestyle and securing employment with a livable wage. Another Chance recognizes that our clients need an environment that is conducive to learning, training and preparing to be productive, responsible and law abiding citizens.

Services Provided:

- Pre-Admission Screening
- Alcohol and Drug-Free Living Strategies
- GED Preparation, Training and Testing
- Job Search and Training
- Vocational Rehabilitation Training/Services
- Religious Services and Spiritual Activities
- Mental Health Services
- Healthcare Services
- Financial Planning and Debt Management
- Resume Writing and Internet Skills
- Computer Training

We work to promote the transformation that will reveal the truth that has been inside of them all along. Another Chance provides resources to ex-offenders that will increase their chances of gaining employment regardless of their past crime. We are dedicated to addressing those issues that prevent ex-offenders from having viable means of employment.

We believe that the right investments in people and community reap returns that last long past the beginning or end of any particular program. We partner with ex-offenders for their individual and collective success - not to make them better recipients of services. We endeavor to equip people with sufficient resources, give them encouragement and they will reach new levels of success for themselves and their families!

Sound investments deliver meaningful returns, and Another Chance invests creativity, support, and energy in ways that literarily change lives by equipping and empowering ex-offenders to succeed. Our investments return healthier, more engaged members of the community; people who are building a future filled with hope and opportunity; and communities where pride and dignity have been restored.

Another Chance invests in success – the success of families and the success of communities!

SHOPPING WITH DIGNITY FOOD SHELF

The Shopping with Dignity Food Shelf recognizes that people in our community are hungry, and we have a significant opportunity to serve our neighbors in need by establishing the Shopping with Dignity Food Shelf.

At present, state-wide studies have indicated that the median income for our community is 20% below the state average, while food stamp usage is 65% greater than the state average. Our local elementary schools report 95% free and reduced lunch rate among students.

A comprehensive food program not only provides needed assistance to our community but also creates new and sustained vitality in our community through weekly volunteer opportunities for the community.

The Shopping with Dignity Food Shelf will distribute groceries each week and provide cooking classes to families to show how to eat healthy.

In addition, the following services are provided:

- Hot Meals available for families and youth;
- Fresh produce weekly;
- Shopping With Dignity weekly food shelf;
- Healthy Cooking Classes for parents;
- Nutritional Classes provided;
- Summertime breakfast and lunch program for children;

KATARTIZO MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

This program is an amazing opportunity for young people to realize the great power of their body and brain, revive their passion and get clarity about their future goals, and learn how they can be active leaders in their family, community, and the world at large.

The Katartizo Mentorship Program focuses on helping young people deeply understand and experience the brain-body relationship and functions, and develop tools to enhance their endurance, determination, and integrity, while opening up their imagination to create a bright future for themselves and their environment.

The Katartizo Mentoring Program is a community-based youth mentoring program designed to encourage and support mutually beneficial, long-standing relationships between an adult role model and children ages 5 to 18. Mentors can offer advice, share life experiences, help a young person navigate challenges and have fun and change the trajectory of a young person's life! Volunteers are recruited, screened, trained and managed by a professional staff to safeguard that every adult is committed to and qualified for playing an active role in the nurturing of a child.

Mentors and mentees develop meaningful relationships during their time together. The success of a mentoring experience depends on the contributions and commitment of everyone involved in the mentoring relationship; the organization, the parent/guardian, the mentee and the mentor.

Objectives include meeting once a week for at least a year participating in activities for example; volunteering together, going to the theater, going to sporting events, taking a walk, enjoy a movie or a meal; supporting the child in life goals and milestones; and being an advocate for the child and support the values of the parent/guardian.

FRESH START MENTAL HEALTH

We strive to provide simple and innovative mental health resources and programs for families and individuals experiencing mental health challenges and to equip the community with support and leadership tools.

We further strive to empower individuals to live well in spite of a mental health diagnosis along with their loved ones through peer-to-peer mental health support groups that are recovery principle driven.

Fresh Start will provide support groups for those who have a mental health diagnosis and for their loved ones. At the core of Fresh Start is the belief that it is possible to live well in spite of having mental health challenge; that no matter how one feels, it is possible to still have hope. A Fresh Start group is a peer-to-peer-led, safe, encouraging, and healing environment where real hope and real healing take place.

Groups Provided:

Fresh Start for Mental Health

Fresh Start for Teens

Fresh Start for Living Free