



# COMMUNITY

People Serving People helps homeless and at-risk children and their families manage crisis situations and build a strong foundation for their long-term success.

## a day in the life of preschoolers

### Early childhood is an exciting and challenging period of development

for many children and parents, and for families experiencing homelessness, those challenges are augmented by anxiety, instability, and loss of routine.

Young children experiencing homelessness come to the classroom with needs beyond the academics of learning their numbers, colors, and shapes. “At the end of the day, none of that {academics} truly matters unless these kids feel safe, unless they are in a stable environment,” says preschool teacher Brittany.

The 4-Star Parent Aware rated Early Childhood Development program at People Serving People aims, first and foremost, to provide a safe environment, which enhances each child’s development through encouragement and guidance. With its structure and consistency, our teachers create a classroom environment that empowers children to grow academically, socially, and emotionally.



Lacking the language or social skills or the emotional stability typically present at this developmental stage, **it might be difficult for these children to express their feelings, to ask for help from teachers, or to get along with other children.** To meet the specific needs of these children, our Early Childhood Development program offers a research-based curriculum focused on the areas of development often affected by homelessness. It both teaches children developmentally appropriate academic concepts, such as numbers, letters, and

colors, and tools to develop trusting relationships and a positive self-concept.

Through regular parent participation and resource referrals, parents are encouraged and supported to become actively involved in their children’s education.

One example of Early Childhood Development’s approach to learning is our focus on executive function skills.

*“Our teachers create a classroom environment that empowers children to grow academically, socially, and emotionally.”*

Research has shown that these skills—participating in “circle time,” sharing toys, asking for help—are more closely tied to kindergarten readiness than knowledge of classic academic content such as the alphabet.

Children experiencing homelessness may have less ability than their stably-housed peers to control their behavior, remain calm in stressful situations, or ignore distractions. To develop executive function skills, our preschool classroom curriculum includes activities that require exercise of these skills.

*“a day in the life of” continued on page 7*



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NEWS

## eric's story: a guest shares his experience

**"I can't let him lose his life to the streets.** He has nothing to do with the streets," Nikki remembers thinking when she saw her son nearly killed while riding his bike around the block.



As Eric left her line of sight, Nikki heard five gunshots and immediately ran toward him. She was relieved to see that a bystander had pushed him off his bike so the bullet hit a tree instead. "I told myself from that day forward," she says, "that I'm not going to put my kids through that." She knew that it was time for a change for her family.

Soon after, Nikki arrived at People Serving People with Eric and his five younger brothers. Eric was about thirteen at the time, and he didn't understand what People Serving People was, "so I was kind of scared about it," he remembers. **"But I was okay with being here because I was with my family,** so there was nothing to worry about." His family has been a support for Eric as long as he can remember. His mother is especially important in his life. "She's a mom and a friend at the same time," he says. "She's a mom when she has to be, she's a friend when I need one, so it's fun being around her a lot."

Nikki encourages her children to keep up in school, and Eric has always excelled

academically. "Eric's a great kid. He's been getting A's in school since he was in kindergarten," says his mother. And Nikki notices that the staff at People Serving People support her son, too. "They love to see when he gets his report card," she says, and they have rewarded Eric's academic success with a gift card and a Vikings jersey. "It's helping because it's encouraging him more, like, 'Okay, just because I'm in here don't mean I have to fail in school,'" says Nikki.

Eric appreciates the relationships that he has cultivated with the staff at People Serving People. He says, "They're cool to be around, they're fun and they're understandable, it's people that you can talk to."

*"Being in the shelter made me want to try to help out with my family and five little brothers and keep them on the right track."*

And he enjoys the activities that People Serving People offers. "It shows me that I have to work harder to do better and be better than the person I am now." Eric has realized that "there's nothing wrong with being here. Being in the shelter made me want to try to help out with my family and five little brothers and keep them on the right track."



Nikki and her sons reading together at People Serving People.

His mother agrees. "By me being here, it's not holding me back, it's just going to make me stronger for the future for me and my boys. It's going to help us strive better." And it has. Nikki and her six boys moved to stable housing in the community, and **Eric continues to excel in school and has become a role model for many of his peers.** He plans to go on to college and hopes to eventually become a doctor.

## center of excellence for resilience: a new space opening in 2017

People Serving People is thrilled to announce our new Center of Excellence for Resilience, opening in early 2017. Our 2016-2018 Strategic Plan envisions a community in which all children have the stability and support they need to develop their full capacity to thrive. Working towards that vision, **the Center of Excellence will both advance our work preventing homelessness in the community and strengthen programming and operations at our emergency shelter.**

The Center of Excellence for Resilience combines early childhood development, school age support, and parental engagement services to homeless and at-risk children and their families, with research, development, and training to improve the field of family resilience and trauma-informed education and service. This dual pathway of education and systems change will improve the health and overall well-being of children, which aids their academic success.

The Center of Excellence will help families thrive through direct programs and have a broad positive impact on the field through systems change efforts including research, community engagement and collaboration, stakeholder convening, advocacy, and educator and provider training.

Located in the Lutheran Social Services Center for Changing Lives at 2400 Park Avenue in Minneapolis, it is close to People Serving People's emergency shelter, **in a neighborhood of concentrated poverty, and adjacent to permanent supportive housing sites** where some of our former shelter guests live. Our Center of Excellence will complement the food shelf, medical, dental, and mental health resources and services offered at the LSS Center for Changing Lives.

Our Center of Excellence is led by Kamyala Howard, whose professional qualifications include a Master of Social Work degree and Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health Graduate Certification from the University of Minnesota, and she is a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker. Kamyala brings to this endeavor 13

years of experience working with children and families in diverse communities, including early childhood program development and management, intercultural community relations, direct clinical practice, and executive leadership. Prior to this position, she was the Director of Children's Services for Greater Minneapolis Crisis Nursery in which she oversaw trauma-informed respite programming and crisis intervention services. Kamyala has a history of bringing many voices to the table in creating solutions to complex challenges, and she is an active voice on advisory councils such as Voices and Choices for Children, Children and Family Ombudsman, and the Center for Early Education and Development.

Sarah Gruidl,  
Social Media and Communications Intern

It's given Nikki hope, she says, to see that the staff at People Serving People believe in her family. "They're telling him how proud they are of him, how they can't wait to see him graduate and go to the college he wants to go to." His mother can't wait for that day either. "When my son goes across that stage, to go to Harvard, the first thing I want them to understand is that PSP was by our side when no one else was there."

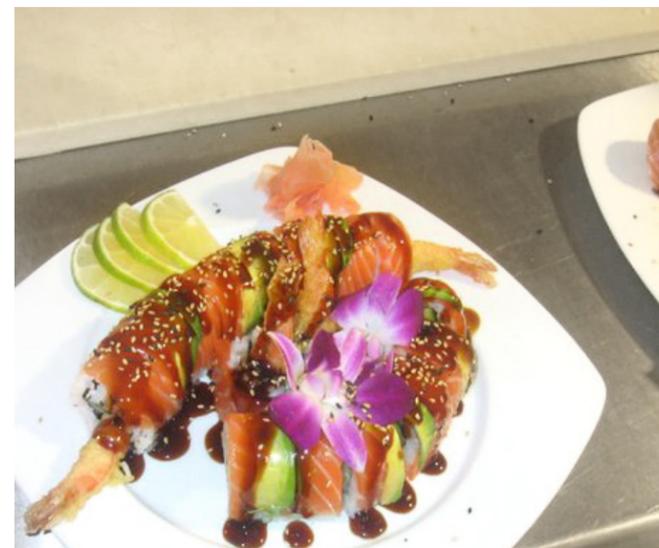
*Our 2016-2018 Strategic Plan envisions a community in which all children have the stability and support they need to develop their full capacity to thrive.*



Join us for events that benefit children and their families sheltering at People Serving People. Chefs for Change dinners are sponsored by chefs and restaurants who donate their culinary skills and the food and wine served at dinner. Our Annual Gala are sponsored by local business partners and generous donors. Event proceeds support programs and services for homeless and at-risk children and their families.

# CHEFS FOR CHANGE

This "chef's table" experience is an elegant dinner party for 40-50 guests, hosted by a top Twin Cities chef, including a four to five course meal with wine pairings. **Are you a restaurant owner or chef who wants to help families find their way home? Contact Mallory Evans today.**



**02.20.17**  
**Prairie Kitchen & Bar**  
 Executive Chef Aaron Hagerdorn  
**\$75/person**



**03.20.17**  
**The Oceanaire Seafood Room**  
 Executive Chef Andrew Wilson  
**\$85/person**



Thank you to our recent host chefs!

**612 Catering**  
 Executive Chef & Owner  
 Danica Liebelt

**Cosmos at Loews Hotels**  
 Executive Chef  
 Timothy Fischer

**The SIX15 Room at The Grand Hotel**  
 Executive Chef  
 Kris Koch

## 2017 unmasking homelessness gala

Join us for Unmasking Homelessness 2017, our 18th Annual Gala to benefit children and families experiencing homelessness. The evening begins with hosted cocktails, silent auction, and fun games. Seated dinner service is accompanied by wine, video program, live auction, and fund-a-need.

**\$180/ticket \$1800/table of 10**  
 Sponsorships available from **\$3000**



Thank you 2016 sponsors, guests, and supporters!



## families volunteering together

Enjoy volunteering as a family experience with your children ages 5 and older.

**12.04.16**  
**People Serving People**  
 4:30pm—6:30pm  
 614 3rd Street South,  
 Minneapolis, MN 55415  
**\$5/person**



We invite you to bring a donation of new or nearly-new board books for our youngest guests.

To register for or sponsor any of these events, contact Mallory Evans.

peopleservingpeople.org/events | 612-277-0256 | mevans@peopleservingpeople.org

## GIVING GUIDE

### \$2500 Prepares children today for success tomorrow.

Our 4-Star Parent Aware rated early childhood development program uses the best research-based practices to prepare children for kindergarten and future academic success.

### \$5000 Helps a family find their way home.

Families stay with us for an average of 41 days. Services include, early childhood development classrooms, after-school learning and enrichment activities, teen programming, advocacy, employment services, parent engagement, support groups, and mental health services.

### \$1000 Engages children, teens, and families.

Educational support and enrichment activities sustain and increase children's academic skills and provide the whole family with a safe outlet for recreation and stress relief.

### \$750 Empowers families to gain stability.

Advocates connect guests with services in the community to help them move towards self-sufficiency.

### \$250 Equips parents to be their child's advocate.

Parents increase their awareness of their child's development and mental health issues through parenting groups, support groups, and referrals to community resources in collaboration with our teachers and advocates.

### \$500 Supports parents in employment search.

Employment Advocates work with guests to build basic employment skills for a successful job search and connect them to local companies looking to hire.



People Serving People is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, tax identification no. 41-1965067. Donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law. Gifts may be used to support any program unless otherwise restricted by the donor.

## WAYS TO GIVE



### one-time gift

We welcome your generous support with a one-time gift.

Online via credit card at [PeopleServingPeople.org](http://PeopleServingPeople.org)

Check mailed to:  
People Serving People  
614 3rd Street South,  
Minneapolis, MN 55415

We also accept gifts of stock.



### sustaining gift

Make a difference in the lives of homeless children all year long with a regular monthly or quarterly gift.

Online via credit card at [PeopleServingPeople.org](http://PeopleServingPeople.org)

Automatic gift from checking account.

Payroll deduction at participating employers, contact your employer.

United Way annual campaign, designate "PeopleServingPeople".



### planned giving

Your legacy. Their futures.

Your legacy gift helps build a community in which all children have the stability and support they need to develop their full capacity to thrive.

Gifts can be made via:

- stocks
- securities
- cash bequests
- retirement accounts
- life insurance
- charitable gift annuities
- and more.



### employer gift match

Leverage your gift with a matching gift from your employer.

Search our online database of employer match gifts at [PeopleServingPeople.org](http://PeopleServingPeople.org) or ask your employer.

Contact Noah Gerding, Individual Giving Manager, [ngerding@peopleservingpeople.org](mailto:ngerding@peopleservingpeople.org) or 612-277-0219 with questions regarding donations.

"a day in the life" continued from cover

Games like "Simon Says" encourage children to engage their inhibitory control, working memory, and cognitive flexibility, which are core components of executive function.

Feedback from parents attests to the importance of these skills as they see them exhibited outside the classroom, too. "My child is less likely to hit, kick, or bite and more likely to use words." "My daughter is not a bully anymore, she is learning to play with other kids." "My son is excited to go to school for the first time, it helped with

his separation anxiety, and he has blossomed." "My child is learning new things every day." **"The teachers got him to open up and be prepared for bigger school."** "The games were helpful and educational. He learned to focus better."

As children leave the Early Childhood Development classrooms at People Serving People and move into stable housing, they and their parents have a strong foundation for further educational and personal growth. One parent simply says, "I feel like I can help her learn now."

*Sarah Gruidl,  
Social Media and Communications Intern*



## day of service: weidner apartment homes

Seventy-five employees from Weidner Apartment Homes donated a day of their time, energy, and talent to children and families sheltering at People Serving People. **The volunteers transformed three resident lounges with colorful murals, furniture, and new books.**

They created a space for a new parent-child interaction program, and they shampooed carpets, painted hallways and offices, and power washed the building entrance.

Giving back to the community is nothing new for Weidner. The Seattle-based company, which recently expanded into the Twin Cities, volunteers a day of service in a different market every year. People Serving People was chosen because we are addressing a need in our community that aligns with Weidner values. Thank you, Weidner volunteers!

## eat to the max at blue plate restaurants

**For the third year in a row**, Blue Plate Restaurant Company is thrilled to announce their partnership and support of People Serving People with Eat to the Max Days. Restaurant guests are encouraged to donate at any participating Blue Plate Restaurant from November 7-17. Blue Plate Restaurant Company has pledged to match total donations collected at the restaurants, up to \$10,000. Participating Blue Plate Restaurants include Highland Grill, Groveland Tap, The Lowry, Longfellow Grill, 3 Squares, Edina Grill, and The Freehouse.

Blue Plate Restaurant Company is a collection of neighborhood restaurants spanning the Twin Cities and its metro regions. The Blue Plate Gives program serves charitable causes that focus on food, family and the communities we serve.

November 7th–17th

**EAT TO THE MAX** DAYS





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