



FALL 2017

# 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 volunteer story: cora's journey

"I've been volunteering at People Serving People for 3 years now. It's a special place, and even the smallest of interactions comes home with me.

I volunteer in the tutoring and enrichment program — **there is just something about the energy at People Serving People that keeps me coming back.** Spending time with the kids here re-charges me. Their positivity, humor, and resiliency brings light to my week, and fills me with a sense of hope. Earlier this year I went on an activity with the children at Gold Medal Park by the river. A young boy named Sam and I were playing Frisbee. I thought I threw one of my best throws ever but, as I let go, the Frisbee flew in the opposite direction — behind me! And there was Sam, with the widest smile on his face, cheering me on by saying, 'It was a great throw!'

Last year, I had the opportunity to meet and work with Marcus. Filled with spunk and passion, Marcus was the kind of child who had so much love in his heart for those around him. He was able to think critically about the picture books we read together, and seemed to hold a deep understanding of the world around him.



However, underneath it all, Marcus faced things that no 8 year old should have to live with. I began to struggle to reach Marcus during our times together. Where passion and energy once filled the room, Marcus came to program visually exhausted. He was so worn down. His mother was struggling with addiction and he didn't have a stable family situation. Trying to be a good brother to his sisters, **together they had so many stressors in their lives.**

But as time went on, and even though he looked physically different from my first meeting with him, the connection we still had remained strong. He had a lot of difficulty controlling his emotions...and he was quite a challenge at times. Nevertheless, his quick wit and the brief flashes of his smile told me Marcus had not lost his passion or care for others.

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*Every interaction I am able to have with the children as a volunteer makes me proud to help People Serving People.*

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I have also been able to build a strong connection with Abbi. Her family had stayed at People Serving People awhile back. Abbi has always had a shy personality...that I definitely understand as an introvert. I related well with Abbi's apprehension to open up to those around her. When she first stayed in shelter and came to tutoring and enrichment programs, our classroom lesson included us asking children the question, 'What will you be when you grow up?' Abbi's answer? 'I'll be on the streets.' That knocked me down.

*"a volunteer story" continued on page 7*

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The board, staff, and community of People Serving People mourn the passing of long-time friend, advocate, supporter, and board member Tim Anderson. Tim passed away peacefully on August 24 surrounded by family and loved ones at his home in Eden Prairie after a courageous four-year battle with pancreatic cancer.

Tim and his wife, Suzanne, made countless professional and personal contributions to the nonprofit community. Tim joined People Serving People's board in 2008, serving multiple terms as board chair and member through 2016, during periods of critical change to the organization. Tim's clear vision, strength of conviction, compassion, and intelligence were vital to the success of these transitions. Our staff and board relied heavily on Tim's wisdom, kindness, and friendship.

Tim Anderson played a key role in shaping the strategic direction of People Serving People's expansion efforts, helping grow our organization's impact upstream of the emergency shelter system. **Tim made a profound and positive impact on the lives of children and families experiencing homelessness and his legacy will endure.**

We will be forever grateful for Tim's tireless advocacy and commitment to People Serving People.

## center of excellence officially open

On June 1, People Serving People's supporters, community partners, and neighbors gathered for a ribbon cutting to officially open the Center of Excellence. **This new initiative expands People Serving People's presence to two locations and reaches families upstream of the shelter system.**

Located in the Phillips neighborhood of Minneapolis, the Center includes a fully licensed Childhood Development Center with a 4-Star Parent Aware rating from the State of Minnesota. The Center's five classrooms serve children

## trauma informed care: update

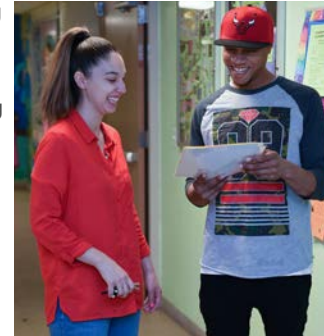
What's it like for families to arrive at People Serving People for the first time? How can we seek feedback from shelter guests when our population is so transient? Does word choice matter when we talk about homelessness?

These are some of the questions we've asked over the last year as a part of our initiative to become fully trauma-informed in our shelter operations and services. In spring 2016, we completed a Trauma-Informed Organizational Self-Assessment. This tool helped us identify areas within our policies, procedures, and facilities where we were inadvertently re-traumatizing guests.

The Organizational Self-Assessment and subsequent work by various staff committees have led to a number of positive changes within the organization.

For example, changes to the security guards' uniform (replacing the police-like uniform with khaki pants and a polo shirt) have reduced re-triggering guests who may have had traumatic experiences with police officers in the past.

If you've visited People Serving People recently, you may have noticed new signage has been posted throughout the building to help guests navigate on their own. We intentionally selected signs with both words and images to make it easier for non-English speakers and those with literacy barriers to understand. We are mindful of how word choice matters and have adopted Trauma-Informed Language Guidelines that focus on people-first language.



ages 16 months-5 years old. We also offer before/after school care for children ages 5-12 years old. Our program was intentionally created with low teacher:child ratios and an emphasis on nature-based elements through the curriculum and daily activities. The aviary, along with classroom pets Tom the guinea pig and Benny the bearded dragon, add much excitement and provide unique opportunities for social, emotional, and academic learning.

Parent engagement programming at the Center of Excellence will be launched this fall. We'll also begin our work to improve the field of family resilience and trauma-informed early childhood development through research, development, community engagement, and provider trainings.

Part of being trauma-informed means seeking our guests' input in meaningful ways such as community meetings. The newly established Guest Advisory Council is a forum for obtaining guest and resident feedback — both positive and constructive — to help guide and influence shelter operations and services. The Council meets bimonthly and is comprised of supportive housing residents, emergency shelter guests, and People Serving People staff.

Guest council members shared in the responsibility of co-creating a "participation agreement" for guests and staff who join the council. Participants have been excited and grateful to have a voice in our services. As one council member said, **"I want to make this place as best as it can be."** Feedback from the council has already prompted some changes and raised concerns we were unaware existed. For example, council members alerted us to concerns they had about children climbing on the electrical transformer box outside the building. In response to this safety threat, a fence was recently installed around the transformer. We look forward to continuing to learn from and alongside the Guest Advisory Council.

**Undergoing the process to become trauma-informed allowed us to self-reflect on our organization's policies, procedures, and facility and better understand the population we serve.** The organizational self-assessment, staff training, and subsequent work groups made us question longstanding assumptions we made about our guests and work. Staff are now aware of how trauma impacts our guests and their ability to handle stressful situations and achieve stability. Our employees can take more constructive approaches to guests in crisis and help deescalate conflicts. Staff trainings helped employees understand how trauma impacts our guests, as well as one's own life. They report feeling empowered and better equipped to handle stress in their daily work.

We are proud of the progress we have made and will continue working to make People Serving People a trauma-informed, supportive environment for our guests and staff.

For more information about enrollment opportunities at the Center of Excellence, call 612-249-5337.





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



## save the date: 2018 unmasking homelessness gala

*a benefit for children and families experiencing homelessness*

Enjoy dinner and dancing with your friends and fellow People Serving People supporters at the 19th Annual Gala, Unmasking Homelessness, as we celebrate the mission and vision of People Serving People.

**April 21, 2018**  
Hilton Minneapolis  
1001 S. Marquette Ave., Minneapolis

**\$180/ticket, \$1800/table of 10**

For information on making a donation to our silent auction or becoming an event sponsor, email Mallory Evans at [mevans@peopleservingpeople.org](mailto:mevans@peopleservingpeople.org)



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.**



## minnesota state arts board grant

“We walk and we walk and we STOP!” sings Sarah Hruska Olson, an instructor from MacPhail Center for Music, as all the preschoolers freeze into place. The song soon resumes, and they continue moving and freezing. This activity is more than a catchy jingle and a way to have children get their wiggles out. Music is an important tool in early learning to help children develop executive functioning skills, such as inhibitory control, working memory, and cognitive flexibility.

Thanks to a Partners in Arts Participation grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board, for the past two years, Ms. Sarah has led weekly music classes in People Serving People’s toddler, preschool prep, and preschool classrooms. This complements our existing curriculum, offering another avenue to promote social-emotional development, cognitive and language skills, motor skills, and problem solving.



Music classes have been enthusiastically received by children and teachers alike. Children love learning songs and playing instruments with Ms. Sarah. Teachers have seen student growth in attending the activity, following directions, and other executive functioning skills.

*Music is an important tool in early learning to help children develop executive functioning skills, such as inhibitory control, working memory, and cognitive flexibility.*

**The impact of the music lessons extends beyond the 30 minute session.** “The songs stick with the kids. We frequently hear them singing or leading their friends in song during free play,” said Meredith Kunitz, Preschool Coordinator.

Teachers are also incorporating more music into their days. Songs can be effective in helping the class transition between activities.

We’re grateful to the Minnesota State Arts Board and MacPhail Center of Music for bringing this new learning opportunity to the children at People Serving People!

*This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.*



## families volunteering together

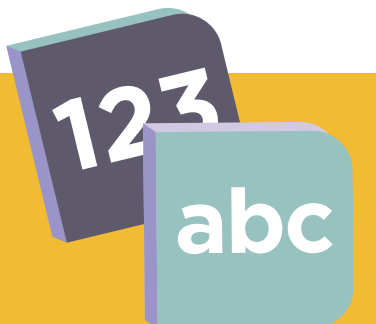
Enjoy volunteering as a family experience with your children ages 5 and older.

**12.09.17**

**People Serving People**

2:30-4:45pm

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](http://peopleservingpeople.org/events)



612-277-0256



[mevans@peopleservingpeople.org](mailto:mevans@peopleservingpeople.org)



## GIVING GUIDE

**\$2,500** Prepares children today for success tomorrow.

Our nationally accredited, 4-Star Parent Aware rated early childhood development classrooms use the best research-based practices to prepare children for kindergarten and future academic success.

**\$5,000** Helps a family find their way home.

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

**\$1,000** 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 community resources to help them move towards self-sufficiency, and they facilitate support groups to address guests' mental health, financial fitness, and wellness concerns.

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

Parents learn about typical child development, behavior management, and parenting resources in parenting groups, individual consultations, and structured play activities.

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

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	 sustaining gift	 planned giving	 employer gift match
We welcome your generous support with a one-time gift.	Make a difference in the lives of children experiencing homelessness with a sustaining monthly or quarterly gift.	Your legacy. Their futures.	Leverage your gift with a matching gift from your employer.
Online via credit card at <a href="https://www.PeopleServingPeople.org">PeopleServingPeople.org</a>	Online via credit card at <a href="https://www.PeopleServingPeople.org">PeopleServingPeople.org</a>	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.	Search our online database of employer match gifts at <a href="https://www.PeopleServingPeople.org">PeopleServingPeople.org</a> or ask your employer.
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We also accept gifts of stock.	Payroll deduction at participating employers, contact your employer.		
	United Way annual campaign, designate "PeopleServingPeople."		

Contact Noah Gerding, Director of Development, at [ngerding@peopleservingpeople.org](mailto:ngerding@peopleservingpeople.org) or 612-277-0219 with questions regarding donations.

"a volunteer story" continued from cover

But I continued, asking 'On the streets? What will you be doing there?' Abbi's answer this time? 'Bad things.' I felt so worn down that this sweet little girl's automatic reply fed into the stereotype of people who experience homelessness. Abbi's family stayed here for a little while longer but then I stopped seeing her in program again.

Then, after some months later, she returned to tutoring and program. This formerly shy, apprehensive, and scared little girl entered the enrichment classroom with a new sense of self. One evening, the same question from when Abbi's family was first in shelter, was asked again: 'What will you be when you grow up?' Though I was partnered with another child, I couldn't help but overhear her quick response...**'A teacher.'**

I cannot begin to tell you how happy I still am that this was Abbi's new outlook on life."

Cora continues to look forward to every Thursday evening, volunteering in People Serving People's Education and Enrichment programs. As she says, her nights volunteering



"often turn out to be some of my best evenings of the week, working with the Sam's, Marcus's, and Abbi's of families in shelter."

The children of families sheltering at People Serving People often have experienced multiple adversities and trauma. As Cora remarked, she is "able to see a little glimmer of humor; passion for life; and, for children like Abbi, the realization of her potential, [even] during such an uncertain time in these kids' lives. **Every interaction I am able to have with the children as a volunteer makes me proud to help People Serving People.**"

## denison parking collaborative

Getting around downtown Minneapolis can be a challenge. Older streets and neighborhoods are getting facelifts while new buildings are being built at what often seems like an overnight pace. This is especially true around the Mill District and adjacent Downtown East, where parking lots have been replaced with office buildings, hotels, and condos. People Serving People's neighborhood is changing dramatically.

For families staying in shelter, this rapid development has meant fewer parking options and increased prices. In addition to needing their car for reliable transportation to childcare and employment, many families use their vehicle to store their extra belongings.



Nearly 350 guests find safety and shelter each night at People Serving People. For those with vehicles, street parking is competitive, an added expense, and spaces are not always available when families need them. Reliable transportation is a critical part of our lives. Parking concerns were causing our guests significant stress and trauma.

"We see parking as a critical, though often ignored need," said Andi Tauer of Denison Parking. **Beginning in November 2016, Denison Parking has gifted hundreds of parking vouchers each month to families staying at People Serving People.** "This is money that guests would have spent on parking and can now spend on other necessities," says Andi. For families like Sophia's, the parking vouchers she received have meant that her children were able to attend childcare, and she and her husband were able to get to their jobs without incident.

"I cannot tell you how much something so small means to us," said Sophia.

As Andi shared, "At Denison we strive to be more than just a business but rather be an integral part of our community. We are so happy to be able to provide People Serving People with free parking vouchers for shelter guests. We are thrilled with this partnership and are happy to be doing what we can."

We thank Denison Parking for helping make stories like Sophia's possible.



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