

"*Ain Dah Yung (Our Home) Center provides a healing place within the community for American Indian youth and families to thrive in safety and wholeness.*"

Mission Statement

Ain Dah Yung Center Campaign Newsletter



VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2



More than ever before in Minnesota, a homeless person is likely to be a child.



Ain Dah Yung
(Our Home) Center
1089 Portland Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55104
651-227-4184
www.aindahyung.com

The face of homelessness...our children

Think of a homeless person. Maybe you are picturing a lone man lying in an alley...lets try again. Only this time picture a sick, frightened, hungry child with no place to call home. As we move into the 21st Century, this cruel vision is the new face of homelessness.¹ More than ever before in Minnesota, a homeless person is likely to be a child. From 1987 to 2004, the number of children living in temporary housing grew more than eight times, from 330 on one night in 1987 to 2,803 on one night in 2004.²

"I had to leave my home...my Mom drinks, and so does my Dad and he hits my Mom just about every night....even though I know my Mom loves me, I couldn't stand being in that house anymore."

"I needed to take my sister and brother away from the abuse

that was happening to them, I thought that I could take care of them."

These are just some of the stories that we hear every day. It's a myth that homeless youth leave home angrily because a parent wouldn't let them go to the mall. Our kids are often victims of families struggling with poverty, abuse, historical trauma, severe conflict and a significant lack of resources.

Eighty percent of homeless children in Minnesota are 12 years old or younger. Forty three percent are five or younger.



The Ain Dah Yung Emergency Shelter began twenty-seven years ago in 1983, providing emergency and short-term shelter to children and youth ages 5 to 17 who are homeless, run-away, in a family crisis, in need of foster care with no home available, or involved with juvenile corrections. **Ain Dah Yung** is the only 24-hour emergency shelter facility for youth in Ramsey County and the East Metro, and is the *only* culturally specific program available to American Indian youth in the Twin Cities metro area, however we welcomes children from all ethnic backgrounds.

Change happens when communities come together. We hope you'll partner with us so that children are no longer the face of homelessness in Minnesota.

Ain Dah Yung...a holistic approach...

Here's how your partnership makes a difference in the lives of our community kids:

- Emergency Shelter Services for youth who need their essential needs met.
- Prevention programming providing culturally relevant training and support to deter kids from developing self-compromising behaviors such as drug abuse, suicide, and

gang relations.

- Education and employment training so that youth can work towards self-sufficiency and independence.
- Street Outreach so that homeless youth know where to turn for help.
- Family Preservation and Reunification services that provide family counseling

and family advocacy.

- Indian Child Welfare Advocacy and Compliance programming to prevent the dissolution of American Indian families and to reduce the number of Native youth in out-of-home placement.

No where else does your support do so much!

Bear Tracks finally leaves homelessness behind him...



“The Youth Lodge is a symbol for youth to look forward to if they are lost, where they can learn and be stable at the same time.”

Bear Tracks Calanche

The Beverly A. Benjamin Youth Lodge has been a program of Ain Dah Yung since 1996, named after a much beloved former Ain Dah Yung staff person. The Lodge provides older homeless youth, ages 16 to 20, with culturally specific transitional living programming, however serves youth from various backgrounds. The Lodge, a cozy house in the Como neighborhood, provides life skill training up to 18 months for youth working towards employment and/or academic achievement and eventual independence and self-sufficiency.

Bear Tracks Calanche was

referred to the Youth Lodge in March of 2009 after he had experienced a year of homelessness in the south Metro Area.

When Bear Track arrived at the Youth Lodge, he was spending nights sleeping in his car. The staff at the Lodge immediately started assisting Bear in finding employment and exploring the various possibilities of post-secondary education. He started attending the male sweat lodge ceremonies through Ain Dah Yung’s Ninijanisag program, participated in Life Skills groups while working one-on-one with staff on setting goals.

With the money that Bear

was able to save while at the Lodge and the life skills he learned, he now resides in his own apartment in NE Mpls and has secured gainful employment.

“The Ain Dah Yung Youth Lodge helped me learn how to pay bills and save money” stated Bear. “I wouldn’t have come here if it weren’t a Native program. It’s certainly important because not everyone has a perfect life or someone to go to for guidance.”

90% of youth who come to the Lodge finish H.S, continue their education, become self sufficient, and finally leave homelessness behind them.

Many youth who have used Ain Dah Yung’s Shelter, Youth Lodge, and other services have returned to Ain Dah Yung over the years as staff, volunteers, board members, and guests. Returning young adults speak of the way in which Ain Dah Yung literally saved their life at a time when many of them thought of committing suicide and giving up.

Homelessness is not just about having no house...

People who don’t have shelter are *houseless*...not homeless. Homelessness has nothing to do with a lack of shelter. Homelessness is about a lack of connectedness. Belonging somewhere is about belonging with other people, like belonging to a family or local community.³ This is why **Ain Dah Yung** works hard every-day to create home style atmospheres with comfortable

living areas, we eat dinners together, we play together and everyone participates in being a part of our “homes.” Our trained staff establish relationships with each youth, relationships that follows them after they’ve left. We are the only agency that makes sure that kids are driven to their respective schools—sometimes their only sense of normalcy, and the shelter

provides tutoring four days a week. Our staff make sure that youth stay connected with their support circle, whatever that may be and work to reunify families whenever possible.

When children come to **Ain Dah Yung**...they come to a place where they feel like they “belong”...they become part of a community.

Here’s how you can be a Partner for Homeless Children this Holiday Season...

Children, teens and young adults age 21 and younger make up approximately 45 percent of all people experiencing homelessness in Minnesota.



It is so difficult to imagine that there are hundreds of homeless children on our streets every night. However, you can help ensure that they have a safe place to go and a chance at survival.

Please visit our website, www.aindahyung.com

and click on **Donate Now**, or mail your tax deductible contribution today in the envelope provided. Here’s your chance to give your Holiday Season that extra sense of warmth knowing that you have played a role in making sure that this year, children who are home-

less will also have a hot meal, a warm place to sleep and positive role models around them that make sure their needs are taken care of.

Thank you for joining us in doing everything we can to give these children hope this Holiday Season!

Ain Dah Yung-Ojibwe for “Our Home”

Questions? Call Deb Foster at 651-227-4184 or e-mail at deb.foster@aindahyung.com