



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Two Local Nonprofits Granted Funds from an Anonymous Donor Advised Fund of the BLACF

Brainerd, Minn. – An Anonymous Fund of the Brainerd Lakes Area Community Foundation (BLACF) donated \$50,000 to two local nonprofits to support their missions of helping those in need. “These impactful donations were made by longtime supporters of BLACF who have enormous generous hearts and are helping to change people’s lives,” said Terri Foster, Executive Director of the BLACF. “They see the urgent need to support homelessness in our community and how connecting these individuals with resources not only offers hope but also a hand-up to get out of difficult situations. Both nonprofit recipients complement each other and are providing needed services to help some of our community’s most vulnerable - making a difference in our community and in the lives of those served.”

The Bridge on 7th Overnight Shelter, a program of Bridges of Hope, is a low barrier warming shelter providing a safe place to sleep for individuals 18+ who are experiencing homelessness in the Brainerd Lakes Area. Guests are welcome for a safe, warm night's sleep at the 1628 S. 7th Street location, open from 7pm – 8am through the winter season. Adults facing a housing crisis can come to The Bridge to receive a space to sleep, warm clothing, as well as a to-go breakfast and lunch for the next day. In addition to the space to sleep, guests can receive connections to community resources through Bridges of Hope’s staff and other area resources. Since opening in December 2021, over 340 individuals have stayed at the shelter for nearly 6,500 nights of sleep and counting!

Open Arms Community Center, a program of Lighthouse Beginnings, is a homeless and recovery resource center in Baxter that provides a supportive, sober, safe environment that assists individuals with putting their lives back together, providing the resources needed to do that. Lighthouse Beginnings points to the gaps in recovery support statewide and has a mission to assist and empower individuals who face roadblocks in the process. They are open Monday through Friday 7:45am – 7:45pm, and Saturday and Sunday from 8am – 5pm. You will find a community space for connections and activities, a small kitchen for meals, staff are onsite to work with clients offering peer support and employee retention and placement opportunities. Future expansion is coming with a woodworking shop and automotive garage being created with another program housed in the facility, the Fatherhood Challenge.

Having a fund at BLACF means donors can get connected easily to needs in the community that match their interests and passions. Since 2002, Bridges of Hope has received significant support of grants and donations from BLACF fund holders, including this recent \$25,000 donation. Foster said, “At BLACF, we are deeply committed to understanding community needs and when possible, connect donors and resources to meet those needs. We recognize the crucial role nonprofits play and how generous donors can help fill gaps in funding areas to make important programs like these possible. Through our ongoing support and collaboration, we aim to amplify their efforts, foster innovation, and create sustainable solutions that uplift those most in need. Together, we strive to build a stronger, more resilient community where every individual can thrive.”

Attached Photos:



Bill Weir, The Bridge on 7th Overnight Shelter Manger; Terri Foster, Executive Director for BLACF, and Jana Shogren, Executive Director for Bridges of Hope share the donation news.



Jesse Jones, Executive Director for Lighthouse Beginnings accepts the donation from Terri Foster, Executive Director for BLACF.



Jennifer Palmer, Amy Buchite, Ashley Paulson, Theresa Rardin, Dawn Conroy-Adkisson, Samantha Blocker, Cali Schwenger, Jesse Jones, Chuck Gifford, and Venus King staff of the Open Arms Community Center and Lighthouse Beginnings accept the check from the anonymous fundholders with BLACF.

Additional Photos:
Pictures from the Open Arms Community Center.



Pictures from the Bridge on 7th Overnight Shelter.



BLACF attracts and administers charitable funds for the benefit of supporting your favorite charities and causes. BLACF was founded in 1998 and is excited for not only the growth in fund assets that the foundation hosts – over \$19.26 million, but even more proud of the \$9 million in grant funding provided to nonprofit organizations from BLACF and in partnership with its fundholders and donors. Those dollars are truly transforming lives and changing our communities! The BLACF is governed by a local board of directors and is a partner of CommunityGiving, a collaborative of community foundations creating efficiencies that maximize donor impact. Collectively, CommunityGiving administers over 1,150 funds, totaling nearly \$230 million. Learn more at CommunityGiving.org/blacf.

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