



# MoveFwd

Annual Report 2017



With the MoveFwd Board of Directors Chair  
Julie Buske, Vice President  
Employee Relations, United Health Group

**>> What brought you to MoveFwd?**

Our mission is very interesting to me. I've lived in the "suburbs" most of my life, and didn't consciously think about kids living on the edge like that—kids!—especially in the western suburbs of the Twin Cities. Most of us are living comfortable lives, our kids are safe and happy in school, we have jobs...things are good. At-risk youth and young adults are invisible to most of us. They don't want anyone to know they aren't safe at home. They generally go to school every day to keep up an appearance of normalcy, but their lives are anything but normal. MoveFwd is really uniquely positioned to help these young people get support, safety and stability. Thank goodness.

**>> What do you think makes MoveFwd so uniquely positioned?**

Definitely our partnerships with our school districts (Hopkins, St. Louis Park, Eden Prairie, Wayzata, Minnetonka). We are welcomed at all our partner schools and work closely with their counselors and mental health resources to most effectively meet the needs of the youth. We literally meet the young people where they are—being in the schools is critical access for reaching the kids. Our staff also keep regular hours at some of the local public libraries, doing outreach to young people who may not be going to school.

**>> Speaking of staff, how would you describe our team?**

Our staff, across the board, are very passionate about homeless youth and our mission. They are absolutely committed to helping at-risk youth and young adults in our community. They adapt in order to effectively—and efficiently—help as many kids as possible. A good example of this is our transition to holding more group sessions in the schools (addressing anxiety, depression, family issues, etc.). The young people have really embraced the groups—they come to realize they are not the only one experiencing these challenges and trying to keep up a positive façade. And our staff really like that they are reaching more young people.

**>> The organization has gone through a transition this year, with long-time Executive Director Lydia Kihm retiring. How are things going?**

We're fortunate in that our new executive director, Sarah Granger, was the MoveFwd program director for many years before assuming her new role. So she's intimately knowledgeable about what we do and how we do it. She's very bright, and has a thirst for learning. She is thinking more broadly about the organization—new leadership often opens the door to new opportunities, and Sarah is taking advantage of those opportunities. She's doing a terrific job.

**>> You also made changes to the board of directors. What stands out for you?**

Our board is stronger than ever, for a number of reasons. We decided to increase the size of the board, which has allowed us to bring new members on more quickly. We've been able to add more diversity to the board as far as professional background, experiences, age, gender, race, etc. Different experiences bring a depth of knowledge and perspective to the board and the organization. And our younger members have brought a great understanding of youth and young adults and also are deepening our use of social media.

**>> Any final thoughts?**

It's an interesting time for the agency and for our society in general. Can MoveFwd make even a small dent in the challenges of these youth? Absolutely, but it's not easy, and it's not going to get easier. The problems aren't going away. They're probably going to be bigger and more pervasive. It's going to be a challenge to meet the growing need in our community. I believe we're up to that challenge.

# PROGRAM OF SERVICES



**COUNSELING** Masters-level counselors work with youth and young adults to help them solve problems, whether they are caused by family issues, chemical use, abusive relationships, neglect, depression, anxiety or stress. Counseling services at MoveFwd are free and confidential, plus clients don't need insurance or a referral.

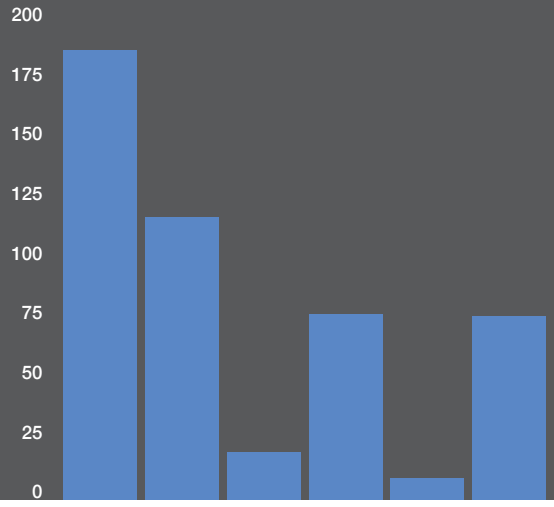
**CASE MANAGEMENT** MoveFwd counselors try to reunite families. When that's not a safe option, case managers will help find safe and stable places for clients to live. Some options for alternative housing may be: extended family, friends, homeless shelters, foster care or housing programs designed for specific age groups. Our counselors know feelings and opinions matter, so they listen to and work with young people to find the best option to keep them safely housed.

**TRANSITIONAL HOUSING** Having a stable place to live is the foundation for success in every area of a young person's life. MoveFwd's transitional housing program gives previously homeless young adults a chance to breathe, create goals that are meaningful to them and receive the support they need to achieve those goals. Young adults (18-24) receive a weekly visit from a case manager to work on budgeting, education, employment and independent living skills and rental assistance for 24 months. There are monthly groups provided at MoveFwd where they support each other through the ups and downs of exiting homelessness and becoming more self sufficient.

**DROP-IN** Young people in need can find an inviting place in what's called "Drop-in". It's located in our offices at the Eisenhower Community Center in Hopkins. There are no appointments necessary. Case managers and volunteers help clients with food, housing, personal hygiene products and advice on a number of topics such as how to get a state ID, birth certificate, etc. It's a safe and supportive place where clients can find something to eat every day and someone who will listen. There are also remote Drop-in locations at the Eden Prairie and Plymouth libraries.

**OUTREACH** There are some young people who will never come through our doors, due to transportation barriers, or life circumstances. Because of this fact, we are committed to spending time outside of our walls going to places where young people are and bringing the services we offer to them. MoveFwd case managers are co-located at 7 different community sites in the west metro and partner with other homeless youth agencies to do street outreach shifts every week. No young person in our community should go without what they need and street and community outreach is one way to ensure that doesn't happen.

Cases



COUNSELING

CASE MGMT

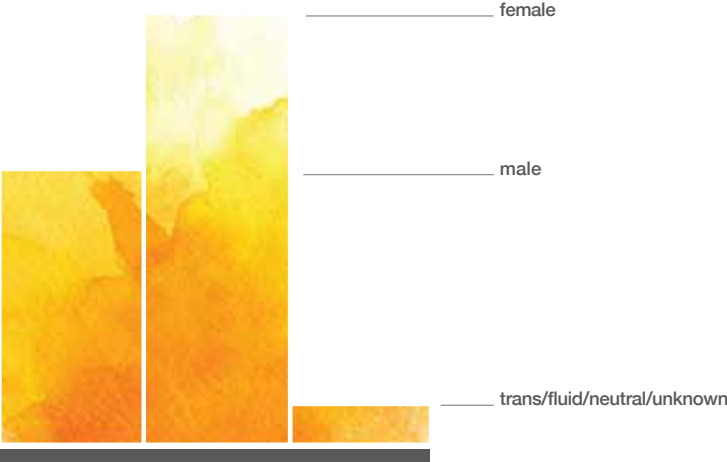
TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

DROP IN

EMERGENCY FUNDS

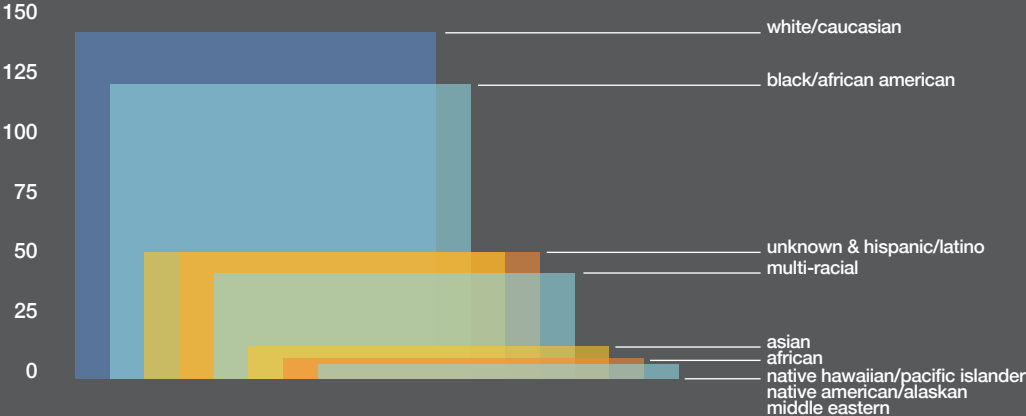
REFERRAL

gender

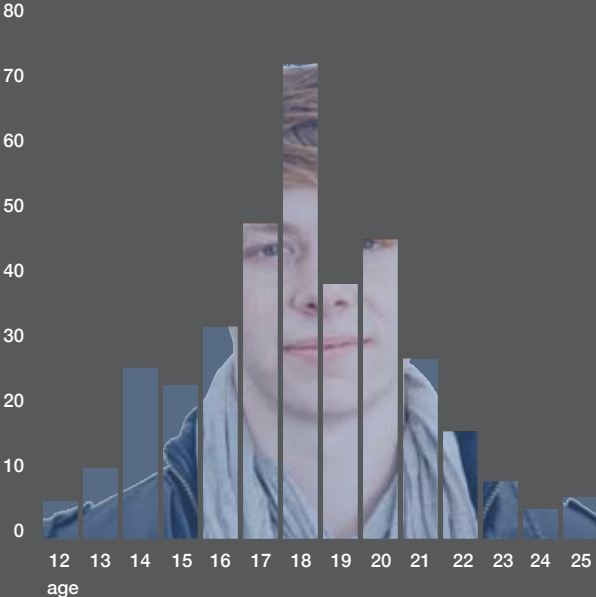


# YOUTH DEMOGRAPHIC

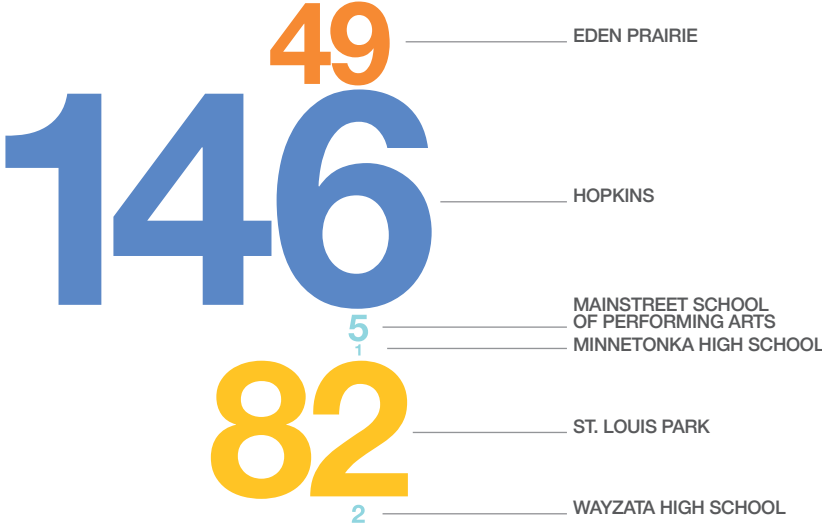
ethnicity



client age

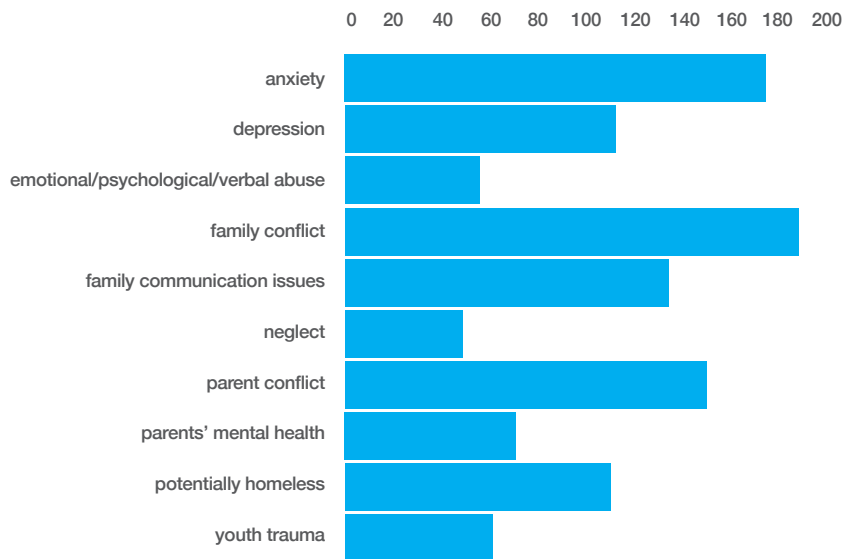


clients by school district



# presenting problems

\*total youth reported



# current housing



■ = 20 kids



*“Communities look to schools to fix problems that are well beyond the scope of what schools can do. It’s nice to have MoveFwd as a partner.”*

*A police officer*



# many thanks to our DONORS

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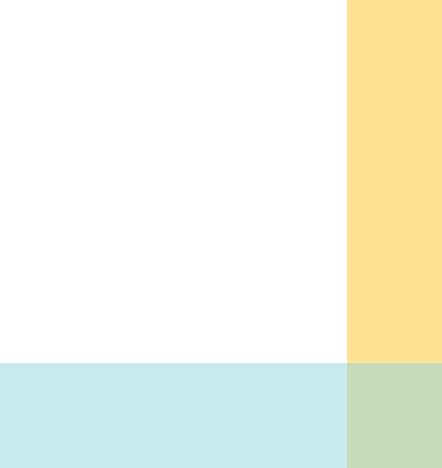
Young people don't have to do it alone. Whatever it may be...homelessness, struggles with their mental health, graduating high school, etc. MoveFwd staff meet with youth every day who are achieving the impossible—despite having experienced the unimaginable. Your gift, whether \$5 or \$5,000, made an impact on the lives of more than 300 youth last year.

Thank you for investing in the lives of young people in your community.



*"I don't know what I would have done without MoveFwd. You helped me through a really hard time. It was nice for me to have an adult to talk to. I just wanted to let you know I've been sober a year now—even though my Mom is still drinking. I'm planning to go to college next year."*

*High school senior*

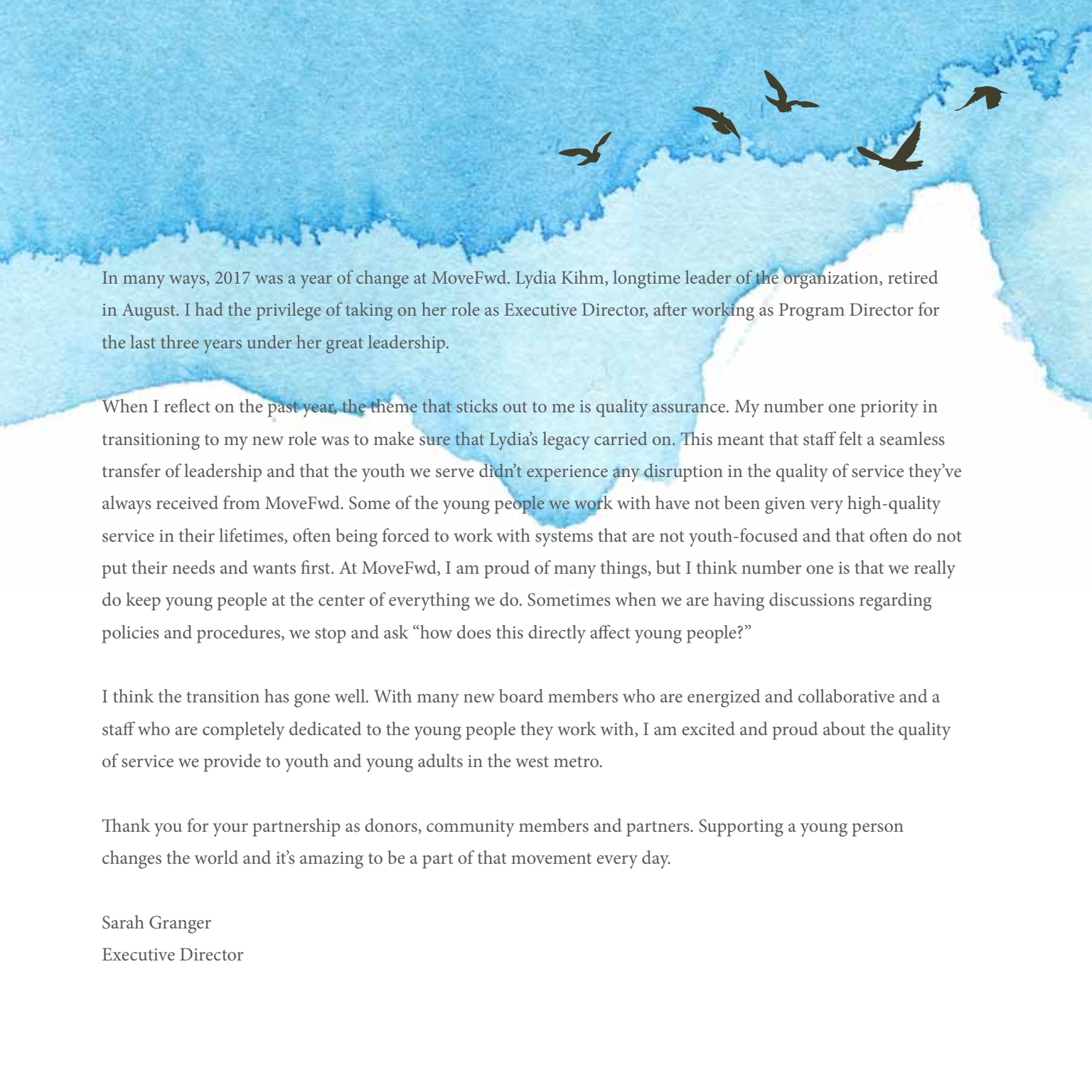


*“There’s a myth so many parents have. If we just love them enough, just give them enough, then everything will be okay. But we just aren’t that powerful.”*

*Your counselors helped us listen again. Thank you for helping me with my boys.”*

*A parent*



A watercolor-style background in shades of blue and white. The top half features a dark blue wash with several black silhouettes of birds in flight, scattered across the upper portion. The bottom half is a lighter, more textured blue wash that blends into the white background at the bottom.

In many ways, 2017 was a year of change at MoveFwd. Lydia Kihm, longtime leader of the organization, retired in August. I had the privilege of taking on her role as Executive Director, after working as Program Director for the last three years under her great leadership.

When I reflect on the past year, the theme that sticks out to me is quality assurance. My number one priority in transitioning to my new role was to make sure that Lydia's legacy carried on. This meant that staff felt a seamless transfer of leadership and that the youth we serve didn't experience any disruption in the quality of service they've always received from MoveFwd. Some of the young people we work with have not been given very high-quality service in their lifetimes, often being forced to work with systems that are not youth-focused and that often do not put their needs and wants first. At MoveFwd, I am proud of many things, but I think number one is that we really do keep young people at the center of everything we do. Sometimes when we are having discussions regarding policies and procedures, we stop and ask "how does this directly affect young people?"

I think the transition has gone well. With many new board members who are energized and collaborative and a staff who are completely dedicated to the young people they work with, I am excited and proud about the quality of service we provide to youth and young adults in the west metro.

Thank you for your partnership as donors, community members and partners. Supporting a young person changes the world and it's amazing to be a part of that movement every day.

Sarah Granger  
Executive Director