

LIGHTHOUSE VIEWS

Our Mission:

*Empower young people
and families to succeed
through a continuum
of care that promotes
healing and growth*



LIGHTHOUSE
YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES

YOU HELPED LEXAVIER FIND A FAMILY

You helped Lexavier Hill find what he was missing. He wanted to be part of a family. At Lighthouse, he found one.

When he was 13 years old, Lexavier bounced from relatives' houses to friends' couches. He had no structure or stability. When he began living at the Lighthouse Youth Development Center (YDC), everything changed. YDC is a residential treatment home for boys. "Life was crazy and awful," he says. "I didn't have a home until I came to Lighthouse. It took me a while to understand they were there to help me."

Another life-changing moment followed a few years later. Lexavier attended a presentation about Big Brothers Big Sisters. He decided to ask a Lighthouse volunteer who spent time at YDC to be his Big Brother. Ray Compagna said yes. It was the beginning of a lasting relationship.

When he was 18 years old, Lexavier moved into an apartment provided by Lighthouse. He was part of the agency's Independent Living program. Things didn't go well. People he considered friends got him into trouble, and he was evicted. He thought he could handle things himself. Lexavier says, "I'd been part of the system my whole life and wanted to get out. I didn't know what I'd be up against."

He got jobs, but he didn't keep any of them for long. He spent time with people who were a negative influence. Finally, Ray told Lexavier he had to change his life. Ray says, "He lost direction. I was upset. I was supportive and trying to help him, and he didn't seem to care. I told him he needed to figure his life out, and I would commit to helping him."

Lexavier took Ray's advice. He decided he wanted to return to Lighthouse, so he sent an email to the CEO. He told him he needed help and a place to live. He also promised he wouldn't let him down. Lexavier got his second chance, and he was as good as his word.

He embraced the classes and counseling available to him. He joined Job Corps, learning how to fix cars and be a deckhand on a cargo ship. He and Ray talked about options for the future. Three years ago, Lexavier chose the military. And things have gone well. The 23-year-old heavy equipment driver recently re-enlisted in the Army. He's stationed at Fort Eustis, Virginia and is engaged and looking forward to getting married.

Last November, Lexavier returned to Cincinnati. Ray bought him a plane ticket so he could attend Lighthouse's 50th Anniversary Reunion. Ray knows the impact Lighthouse and Big Brothers Big Sisters had on Lexavier. "We have a crew of people who've been his family since his early teens," Ray says. "Most people have no idea what someone like Lexavier has gone through. I will tell you it does take a village to help these kids."

Lexavier says, "Thank you to everybody who supported me. I'm glad they have programs that support kids. It feels good to have people who will do that." He plans to find a way to give back to young people as a way to thank those who helped him. But first, he says, he wants to make everyone who believed in him proud.

**“I DIDN’T HAVE A HOME UNTIL I CAME
TO LIGHTHOUSE. IT TOOK ME A WHILE
TO UNDERSTAND THEY WERE THERE
TO HELP ME.”**



Lexavier says he's successful today because Ray and the rest of his Lighthouse family saw his potential and didn't give up on him, even when he was struggling.

YOUR SUPPORT GAVE BEN A HOME

You are the reason Ben had somewhere to turn when he was broke and homeless. When he was a freshman in college, Ben told his parents he was bisexual. His parents told him he should find another place to live.

Ben stayed with his boyfriend's family for a few days but needed another solution fast. Someone at school told him he could find help at Lighthouse.

And he did. A short time later, Ben was a guest in a Lighthouse Host Home.

With the help and support of his host family, Ben worked full time and attended college online. After nine months, he had saved enough money to return to college full time and share an apartment with friends on campus. Ben found a Host Home and success because of you.

Ben says, "No one is prepared to become homeless. When it happened to me, the Host Home program offered me guidance, resources, and most importantly, a home. The host family welcomed me into their home with open arms. I am glad to say that I am back on my feet and on track to have a successful future."



Ben says he doesn't know where he'd be without his host family and the Host Home program. He says Joanne and Dave went above and beyond, giving him a safe environment and establishing relationships that he knows will last a lifetime.

The Host Home program matches LGBTQ young adults in need of housing with volunteers who provide short-term housing, food, and guidance as the young person works to achieve their goals. Interested in becoming a volunteer?

You can reach Host Home Manager
Andy Buechel at
abuechel@lys.org
or 513-487-7160.

THANKS TO YOU, DIAMOND IS LOOKING FORWARD TO A POSITIVE FUTURE

Because of you, Diamond had the opportunity to learn how to stand on her own two feet. Diamond and her young brothers suffered repeated abuse at home. When she was 13, she and her brothers were placed in foster care. As they moved from home to home, they felt confused and unwanted. Three years later, Diamond found out she had two separate medical conditions, and as a result, she was separated from her brothers. She says she felt worthless, powerless, and defeated. At age 17, she moved in with her boyfriend. He abused her, and after she gave birth to her daughter, she knew she had to leave.

She and her daughter slept on a relative's couch. But Diamond knew she couldn't go on this way. She decided it was best for her daughter to live with a relative while she figured out her life. Her next step changed everything. She went and stayed with a friend who told her about Lighthouse. Diamond took the chance and contacted Lighthouse. She applied for supportive housing, and a short time later, she moved into a Lighthouse apartment.

That was about two years ago. And Diamond says she can't believe how much her life has improved in that time. At Lighthouse, she says she found support, trust, and empowerment for the first time in her

life. She has a job and has moved into her own apartment. She says she feels in control of her life and is ready for what's coming next, including reuniting with her daughter. And Diamond is an important part of the effort to help every young person in Cincinnati have a place to call home. She is the lead member of the Youth Advisory Council for KEYS to a Future Without Youth Homelessness plan (KEYS). The plan is the result of a community effort to create an innovative system that ensures all young people ages 18-24 have access to safe, affordable, and stable housing. KEYS relies specifically on ideas and recommendations from young people who have experienced homelessness.



Diamond (pictured far left) participated in the inaugural Cincinnati Youth Speak Up! class. The Corporation for Supportive Housing Speak Up! program empowers formerly homeless individuals to use their stories as an advocacy tool in the fight to end homelessness. This photo was taken during graduation night, when each member of the class opened up about their journey from homelessness to stability to advocacy, focusing on the impact supportive housing has had in their lives.

Diamond says the past few years have been the foundation to the beginning of her life and all of her success is the result of having a safe and affordable place to live.

The Lighthouse Youth Housing Opportunities program helps young adults learn how to take care of themselves while they live in safe, furnished apartments. They also receive the support they need to achieve their goals. The program is available to young adults in the child welfare system and those who are homeless.

Thank you for your support of the 2019 Fall Event!

Plus, a special thank you to all our sponsors, including:

Grand Dame

Ginger Warner

Crème de la Crème

Natasha M. Cavanaugh/The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
Bob & Brynne Coletti
Heidt Family Foundation



THANK
YOU
FOR
MAKING
WISHES
COME TRUE!



Beacon OF Light HUMANITARIAN AWARDS GALA

We hope you can join us for the Beacon of Light Humanitarian Awards Gala on April 18! Together, we will honor two community leaders with the Lighthouse Beacon of Light Humanitarian Award: Darqueze Dennard and Dr. Monica L. Newby. This annual award recognizes leadership, community service, and a positive impact on the lives of children, youth, and families.

The evening will also include a special tribute to four long-serving Lighthouse volunteers. Steve Campbell, Ken Feldmann, Robert E. Rich, and Robert C. Zepf will receive the President's Award.

The evening at the Hyatt Regency Cincinnati includes cocktails, a gourmet dinner, live music, and dancing. Lisa O'Brien is the event's chair, and all proceeds will support the services Lighthouse provides to thousands of young people and families each year.

Register today at lys.org to join us for this special occasion! For more information about the event and sponsorship opportunities, please contact Jennifer Miller at 513-487-7154 or jemiller@lys.org.

Humanitarian Award Honorees



DARQUEZE DENNARD



DR. MONICA L. NEWBY

President's Award Honorees



ROBERT C. ZEPF,
KEN FELDMANN,
STEVE CAMPBELL,
ROBERT E. RICH

Beacon Gala Chair



LISA O'BRIEN

HOW YOU CAN HELP



DONATE A SHELTER MEAL

A delicious meal does more than satisfy the hunger of a young person escaping homelessness. It reminds them someone cares and wants to help them. Meals can be made at home and dropped off or cooked in our kitchen. Or, you can have food delivered!



LEAVE A LEGACY

When you leave a legacy to Lighthouse, you're making a gift that will change someone's life forever. With a little planning, you can include a gift to Lighthouse within your overall estate or financial plans that furthers your own goals and provides you with tax benefits.



GIFTS OF STOCK

Donating appreciated securities – such as stock or mutual funds – to Lighthouse is a tax-wise approach to helping children and families in need. A donation of appreciated securities maximizes tax savings, and you receive a tax deduction for the fair market value of donated securities. And it's easier than you think.



VOLUNTEER

Do you want to do something that is satisfying and of service to your community? Then become a Lighthouse volunteer! No matter what your interests or passion, there are opportunities to get involved.



KROGER COMMUNITY REWARDS

Help young people and families in need every time you swipe your Kroger Plus Card. Go to KrogerCommunityRewards.com, sign in to your account, search for "Lighthouse Youth" in the Find an Organization box, and click "Enroll" in the Lighthouse box. You'll start making a difference right away while still earning your fuel points.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO LEARN MORE?

WE'D LOVE TO TALK TO YOU! PLEASE CALL 513-221-3350 AND ASK FOR THE DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT OR GO TO OUR WEBSITE LYS.ORG.



401 East McMillan Street
Cincinnati, OH 45206



Your newsletter has arrived!



***You Helped
Lexavier Find
a Family***



***Your
Support
Gave Ben
a Home***



***Thanks
to You,
Diamond's
Future is
Bright***



LIGHTHOUSE
YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES