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Back Cover
In a place that looks like no other juvenile correctional facility, boys are discovering the truth about themselves and their criminal behavior. This year marks 30 years of service at Lighthouse Youth Center at Paint Creek, a community campus option for boys adjudicated delinquent in Ohio.

Since opening in 1986, the Center in rural Bainbridge has remained statistically more effective and less expensive than traditional options. The rate of repeat offenders three years after being treated and released from the Center at Paint Creek is 22 percent, compared to 45 percent at other correctional facilities in the state.

We’ll commemorate the achievements and services at Paint Creek during an Open House on September 21 at 1 p.m. If you’d like to join us, please contact Pam Oeffler at 513-487-7125 or poeffler@lys.org.
Lighthouse Youth Services proudly announces the Board of Trustees has chosen Paul Haffner as the organization’s next President and Chief Executive Officer. His first day will be August 22.

Paul’s appointment as CEO comes as part of a planned leadership transition preceding Bob Mecum’s retirement at the end of the year.

“I am so excited to join the team at Lighthouse as we work together to end youth homelessness in Cincinnati by 2020. The agency’s staff does amazing work, and the positive impact of its many services is well-known,” said Haffner.

Paul, an attorney with Calfee, Halter & Griswold, is a proven leader and community advocate. He is currently the Board Chair of the Cincinnati Nature Center, a member of the board of the Hamilton County Developmental Disabilities Services, and a member of the Leadership Cincinnati Class 39. He chaired the then record setting Golf Classic in 2011 for Ronald McDonald House and chaired the record setting Annual Fund campaign in 2015 for the Cincinnati Nature Center.

Paul’s selection caps a search process facilitated by Gilman Partners, a respected search firm which specializes in placing executives. A large initial prospect pool was narrowed by stages to a group who interviewed with the Lighthouse Board’s Search Committee, and then a final meeting with board leadership.

Paul is looking forward to collaborating with you to best serve our community, and is dedicated to achieving Lighthouse goals. He is not alone, though. The Lighthouse Executive Management Team has never been stronger thanks to outstanding succession planning.

Bob will retire from the CEO post on December 31. He has served as CEO of Lighthouse since 1978. He began his Lighthouse career as Director of the Lighthouse Runaway Shelter in 1976. Bob and Paul will work together during the transition.

Paul lives in Mariemont with his wife, Karri, and their twin teenagers, Grace and Gus.
ENDING YOUTH HOMELESSNESS IN CINCINNATI

On my way into my office this morning in Walnut Hills, I slowed down on Iowa Street to watch a construction crew working on the installation of a driveway that will become the new entrance to a four-story 65,000 square foot housing and service complex for homeless youth in Cincinnati.

This building is a pivotal piece of the plan to end youth homelessness in Cincinnati by 2020, a goal Lighthouse Youth Services established as its number one strategic priority in 2013.

As I watched the workers I thought, “Wow. It’s actually going to happen.” I was filled with an overwhelming sense of gratefulness. Lighthouse staff, volunteers, and donors have worked quietly and effectively in our goal to raise $25 million to build and sustain this complex to serve homeless youth.

The work of ending youth homelessness began in earnest in June 2013 when Lighthouse reached out to community partners, volunteers, funders, and others to join us in the planning and the examination of three things:

1. The scope of youth homelessness in Cincinnati;
2. Who among the young people in Cincinnati were at the highest risk of homelessness;
3. Best practices in the prevention of youth homelessness and in supporting homeless youth toward self-sufficiency and stable housing.

Young people of different backgrounds and experiences, all of whom experienced homelessness, were equal and strong partners throughout the planning process. They shared stories of abuse and neglect at the hands of their parents and caregivers; the dangers they faced as homeless youth on the streets; and their concerns about violence and exploitation by adults who often offered to trade housing for sex.

It became clear that our community needed specific strategies to prevent homelessness in the first place as well as different pathways for young people out of homelessness. We were able to document that young people aging out of the foster care and juvenile justice systems, LGBTQ youth, and young people with severe and persistent mental health issues are at the very highest risk of youth homelessness.

We also determined that specific strategies are necessary to address the different groups of youth at the highest risk.

As we reviewed the data from calendar year 2014 from our partners, we documented the tragic scope of the problem of youth homelessness in Cincinnati:

- Lighthouse Youth Services served over 2,500 homeless youth.
- 32% of them had been involved in the child welfare system; victims of abuse, neglect and dependency.
- Cincinnati Public Schools reported having 3,712 students who were homeless. The district ranked third in the state in terms of the total number of homeless students.
- Just under 130 youth exited the child welfare system or the juvenile corrections system, many without permanent supportive connections to a caring adult.

So we set to work to develop the strategies and resources our city needs to end youth homelessness.

Together, we have accomplished so much in three years, including:

- City, County, State and Federal funders joined in funding Lighthouse to develop research based prevention services including Assertive Community Treatment teams, Street Outreach teams, and High Fidelity Wrap Around teams.
We are on the way toward ending youth homelessness in Cincinnati. While there remain many challenges, we are brimming with gratitude and optimism from the overwhelming and positive support you have shown for homeless youth.

- Bob

Advocates from around the state joined with Lighthouse to expand the age of foster care to 21, a bill that was signed into law by Governor John Kasich in June of this year.

Community foundations and donors joined with public funders to provide Lighthouse with $19 million to purchase and renovate a new facility for homeless youth that will include 28 beds of shelter, a day services center, mental health and substance abuse treatment, and 39 units of long-term housing for homeless youth.

Ending youth homelessness in Cincinnati by 2020 means that by 2020, any young person alone and on the streets of Cincinnati will have shelter. By 2020, any youth in shelter in Cincinnati will be able to leave that shelter with a plan for self-sufficiency and the support to provide that young person with a safe and supported place to live.

OPEN HOUSE

Thank you to everyone who attended an Open House last month before construction began. Visitors had fun signing the “guest book” on the wall!
Welcome Jayson Pratt as Lighthouse’s new Vice President and Chief Operating Officer! As COO, he leads the agency’s three service area Vice Presidents, the Clinical Director, and Grants Management. Jayson has extensive experience supervising clinical programs and providing operational oversight for juvenile justice services, residential treatment, homeless youth shelters and substance abuse treatment programs. He was most recently Vice President and Regional Clinical Director for Phoenix House of New England. Prior to his work at Phoenix House, he worked for The Right Step, an organization focused on outpatient and inpatient addiction treatment in the Southwest. Originally from Dayton, Ohio, Jayson is married with two children.
One component of Lighthouse’s work to end youth homelessness in Cincinnati by 2020 is the Safe and Supported Community Plan. This pilot program is aimed at preventing homelessness in the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community and better serving those already without a home. The latest Safe and Supported initiative is a Host Home program, a volunteer-based response to youth homelessness.

The Host Home program offers an alternative to emergency shelter for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth ages 18-24. The program is designed for youth who are on the verge of experiencing street homelessness after being rejected by their families or no longer feel safe at home.

As volunteers of the program, adults open their homes and their hearts to LGBTQ youth for an agreed period of time while the youth works toward a more stable living situation. Both youth and host families receive ongoing support such as training and case management to ensure the match is successful and youth are moving toward independence.

Want to learn more about this new volunteer opportunity? Host Home Outreach Manager Dan Stultz would love to hear from you at dstultz@lys.org or 513-487-7160.

The first training session for the Safe and Supported Host Home Program is August 20 and 21.

Host Eligibility
Requirements include:

- Must be at least 25 years old
- Submit to background checks
- Complete required training

Dan Stultz,
Host Home Outreach Manager
Join the Lighthouse team and help a child feel safe and loved

Lighthouse Foster Care and Adoption Director Jami Clarke beautifully highlights the need for foster parents right now—especially foster parents for teenagers—in a letter recently published in the Cincinnati Enquirer.

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Family. It’s something most of us have, many of us take for granted, and at least a few of us complain about to friends and colleagues. But family is also at the emotional and biological core of our society. Families give us life, care for us when we are vulnerable, and provide love and support through challenges big and small. The question becomes, what defines family? Is it limited to the role of birth parents and relatives or can a family be a combination of children and the special people who take interest in them day in and day out with unconditional love?

Unfortunately, too many children and teens today don’t have this fundamental element in their lives. These young people can’t live safely with their birth parents right now, and need someone else to care for them. It’s time for us to do more to ensure that all children have the family they need and deserve.

The need for foster parents in our community is greater than ever. Especially needed now are foster parents for teenagers, as you are never too old to need a hug, want someone to celebrate your accomplishments, or someone to check that you made it home safely.

Children don’t stop needing to be parented—loved, guided and protected—once they turn 13. But teenagers in the foster-care system face a heartbreaking plight: At a stage in life that already is tumultuous, they are less likely to be able to find foster parents, ending up instead in a group home or institution.

Teenagers waiting for a foster home are just like younger children in foster care. Often, they’ve been abused or neglected, or they were abandoned by parents who themselves have serious issues.

These teens are still growing up. They need someone who won’t give up on them and know that you will be there for them, even when they fall—as they will make mistakes, we all do!

Fostering a teen is so rewarding….watching a child get ready for a first date or play in their first high-school game, even helping them prepare for their first job interview. Foster parents provide guidance and encouragement as children prepare for adulthood, helping with college or career plans or simply opening a youth’s eyes to what a normal life—economic stability, good citizenship and responsible behavior—looks like.

This month, and every month, we need to take action to ensure that every child and youth has what we all want—a safe and loving family.

Interested in talking with someone who has been through the process? Considering becoming a foster parent? Your support, guidance and care can have a lifelong impact. Please call us at 513-487-7135. We will support you every step of the way.

Jami Clarke
Director, Lighthouse Foster Care and Adoption
**FINDING FOREVER FAMILIES**

During the last fiscal year (July 1, 2015–June 30, 2016), Lighthouse celebrated 34 adoptions!

The Schumacher Family

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**WORK BEGINS ON NEW STATEWIDE PROGRAM**

*Ohio Supporting Foster Youth Through Age 21*

The Ohio Fostering Connections Act is now law! The law extends services to foster youth through their 21st birthdays. Previously, foster youth aged out of the system at 18 and no longer had access to services. The new law means foster youth will now receive the support they need to become independent adults, including help preparing for college or a career, as well as transitional housing options, such as apartment programs, campus housing, and foster and host homes. The work of implementing the new program has begun and it should be in place by the end of next year. Lighthouse staff and Board members, Foster Care and Adoption Director Jami Clarke, Youth Housing Opportunities Director Bonita Campbell, and Planning and Policy Director Meredith Hicks were all a part of the team who advocated for this new law. Board members included Marvin Butts, Laquita Howell, and Taitana Rozhnova. Thank you for supporting this effort over the past three years to help give young Ohioans better opportunities to succeed!

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**FLYING HIGH**

Some Lighthouse foster children are now flying high wearing custom super hero capes! The children received the capes through an ArtRx program at ArtWorks Cincinnati. The goal of the Hero Design project is to empower children facing hardships. Hero Design Facilitators work with the children to help them identify their own personal strengths, abilities and real world super powers, and co-create their very own superhero insignias and capes. Thank you ArtWorks for demonstrating that regardless of limitation or circumstance, a true hero lives within every child.

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YOU’RE MAKING DREAMS COME TRUE

Building hope and fulfilling dreams. That’s what the more than 500 guests who attended the Beacon of Light Humanitarian Awards Gala in April did for children, youth and families in need. This year Lighthouse honored five community leaders: Iva Brown (awarded posthumously), Ryan Messer and James Musuraca-Messer, Edgar Smith, and Rabbi Gary Zola. The “Field of Dreams” gala raised more than $275,000 for the effort to end youth homelessness and Lighthouse Foster Care.

Nancy Shepardson, the 2016 gala chair, is a long-time Lighthouse volunteer and member of the Lighthouse Community School Board. Honour Pillow and WLWT News 5’s Courtis Fuller were the emcees.

The 2017 Beacon of Light Gala chair, Kate Bennett, is already planning next year’s big event, which will be April 29, 2017 at the Hyatt Regency. The 2017 Beacon of Light Humanitarian Award honoree is retiring Lighthouse CEO and President Bob Mecum.

Thank You to Our Sponsors!

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Phil & Beth Montanus
Daniel & Susan Pfau
Claire Phillips

FUN FALL FUNDRAISER

Make a difference while enjoying an afternoon of “Fashion Food Friends & Fun!” Peggy and Gary Johns are hosting Lighthouse’s annual fall fundraiser in their beautiful Indian Hill home on September 29. You’ll enjoy lunch by the bite, wine by the glass, and shopping at boutiques which will donate a portion of the day’s proceeds to Lighthouse. For more information, contact Lauren Frooman, 513-487-7154 or lfrooman@lys.org, or go to www.lys.org.

Lighthouse CEO Bob Mecum, Honoree Rabbi Gary Zola, Honoree Ralph Brown (Iva Brown’s husband), Honoree Edgar Smith, Honoree James Musuraca-Messer, Honoree Ryan Messer, 2016 Beacon Chair Nancy Shepardson

Libby Simmons Callan, Event Chair
...five students graduated from Lighthouse Community School this year?

...Help Me Grow is currently serving approximately 560 children?

...16 students attended the summer program at Western Hills High School?

...WAY to Wellness has moved from its space in Essex Studio to the Lighthouse Community Warehouse? The warehouse will offer new opportunities for clients to learn and practice prevocational skills. WAY to Wellness is designed to help severely emotionally disturbed youth learn life skills and reach employment and educational goals.

**LIGHTHOUSE COMMUNITY WAREHOUSE**

Hours are Monday, Wednesday & Thursday from Noon-4 p.m.

Important Note: We’re unable to pick up furniture donations. If you have furniture you’d like to drop off, please contact the warehouse staff at warehouse@lys.org or 513-221-0075.

Essex Studio Warehouse
501 Minnesota Avenue | Cincinnati, OH 45206
FRESHER THAN FRESH

The community is buzzing about the garden at the Lighthouse Community School. There’s no better place to find fresh produce and eggs than the school’s Garden Market at corner of Chandler and Ward Streets in Madisonville every Thursday and Saturday. You’ll also find rain barrels, tomato cages and outdoor benches for sale. All proceeds benefit the school’s urban agricultural program, so stop by soon and support the students.

Madisonville Garden Market
Brought to you by the collaboration of:

Lighthouse Community School
500 Gardens

Thursday 4:30-7pm
Saturday 11am-1pm

Located in the garden at
6001 Chandler Street

Questions?
Contact kristine.ahall@gmail.com or (513) 898-1313