



December 30, 2016

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Point-in-Time Count of Anoka County Homeless January 26, 2017

Have you had family members stay with you while they work to pay unexpected medical expenses? Is your former neighbor living in a shelter after losing her home after a job loss? These are just a couple examples of what homelessness looks like today in Anoka County.

In order to get an accurate assessment of the extent of homelessness in the U.S., the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) each January requires an annual Point-In-Time Count of homeless individuals. The count includes men, women, and children who are living in shelters, on the street, or in places not meant for human habitation, as well as individuals and families living in substandard housing or with family or friends.

“This annual count helps us assess the extent and nature of homelessness in our community,” said Rhonda Sivarajah, chair of the Anoka County Board of Commissioners. “We use the findings to build awareness, measure the progress we’ve made, and determine what resources are needed for ongoing local efforts to fight homelessness.”

This year’s count has a particular focus on impacting youth homelessness. Throughout Minnesota during the night of the 2016 Point-In-Time count, 944 youth were identified as homeless. In Anoka County, 12 youth were homeless and staying outside. While that number may be small, consider that your son’s friend who spends many nights “sleeping over” because he doesn’t feel safe at home is a youth who may be homeless. Youth are extremely resourceful and

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“couch-hop” from friend to friend over the course of weeks, months, even years. You can be a part of ending homelessness by volunteering with the 2017 count.

Heading Home Anoka, in partnership with the Suburban Metro Area Continuum of Care, a network of organizations, residents, and businesses working to end homelessness, will be conducting the count. It will take place Thursday, January 26, beginning at 12 a.m. and ending at 11:59 p.m., and will include locations throughout the county, including homeless shelters, city streets, and other known homeless encampments. Volunteers are needed to help conduct the count.

Go to www.anokacounty.us/homelessness to sign up to volunteer or for more information.

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