In 2006, Dr. Natasha Slesnick established the OSU Star House as the only drop-in center for homeless youth in Central Ohio. Although the house was originally set to close at the end of a research project in 2011, Dr. Slesnick decided that as the only basic needs center dedicated to homeless youth, we had a responsibility to our youth to remain open and operating for as long as possible. After seeing us through a very exciting year where we received funding through the State of Ohio and the Ohio Attorney General’s Office, Dr. Slesnick has identified a new Director for the Star House. This will allow her more time to focus on the type of research that founded the house in the first place!

The money received through the Attorney General’s VOCA Grant as well as House Bill 59 has allowed us to further our mission in helping the youth of Central Ohio. The funding, as well as the work done by those in the community, sends a clear message to our youth that there are many people throughout the state that truly care for them. “Just because you’re homeless doesn't mean you are alone or that there's no help out there. The Star House is a home away from home when you don't have one. Thank you!” said Brie, a Star House youth

Our New Director!

We would like to take this opportunity to officially introduce the new Director of the OSU Star House, Joe Edwards, Ph.D. Dr. Edwards is a product of our very own Ohio State University, and has been serving Central Ohio for the last 20 years. Among other organizations, he has previously worked for the Buckeye Ranch, another youth oriented program based in Columbus, and most recently for the Franklin County Alcohol, Drug, and Mental Health Board.

“'I couldn’t be more excited about this opportunity to serve such a high need and underserved population,” says Edwards. “I believe the Star House can provide us with a very unique opportunity to help people, and I look forward to working with our volunteers and other organizations in the community to give our youth a much needed second chance.”
Big Things Are On The Way

Our New Therapist

Michelle Cobbs joined our team as our first full time, independently licensed therapist. She has previously worked with OSU’s Office of Diversity and Inclusion, working with economically disadvantaged and first generation college students. Even in her short time at the house, it is obvious to all of us that she brings the positive, loving encouragement that we were looking for when we began searching for a new therapist. We couldn’t be any more excited and it’s clear that she will be a great advocate for our youth.

Michelle Cobbs

“I have a great deal of compassion for the youth that frequent the Star House, and I view them as budding ‘stars.’ As a Social Worker, I am dedicated to providing service, recognizing the dignity and worth of all persons and to strengthening human relationships in order to promote, restore, maintain, and enhance the well-being of individuals. So, in helping homeless youth meet their basic needs, and to begin reconnecting them with the larger social system, by giving them hope, unconditional positive regard, and helping them to exit homelessness, is not only an ethical mandate, but it is a job that I find personally

What we’ve been up to

As you may be aware, earlier this year we received an increase in funding. We have set very high goals for ourselves with which to use that money, our most considerable being to remain open 24 hours a day, seven days per week. We are proud to say we have taken significant steps towards making this happen.

Weekend and Holiday Hours

On Sunday, August 25th, we began opening our doors to the youth on weekends. Also, this past Thanksgiving marked the first time in the history of the Star House that we remained open on an observed holiday, and we will remain open on all holidays from now on. For those of our youth without traditional supports or loved ones to spend the day with, we’re very happy to finally be able to provide a warm and welcoming alternative.

We’re looking for a new facility!

In order to be able to fully assist the youth as we move towards round-the-clock operations, it is clear that we need a new building to call home. This is one of our top priorities, and we hope to move as soon as possible. We have begun scouting locations in the university area, and we are launching a capital campaign in order to raise money for a new or renovated building.

There is still more to come!

We are diligently working to complete our current goals in a timely manner. We are deep in the middle of the hiring process for our six full-time overnight monitors, and we hope to have our second full-time therapist in the house on Dec. 16th! We’re elated to show the youth that people in their community continue to support and care for them.
We couldn’t do it without you

Since May 2013, you all have given back with over 500 volunteer hours! Star House is largely a product of the community, and we wouldn’t be successful meeting the needs of our youth without your support. We would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude towards the invaluable direct engagement, material resources, cleaning, and even some construction work, from our volunteers.

One of the numerous groups dedicated to providing services are past recipients of the Northwest Women of the Year Award from Upper Arlington Rotary. These volunteers, coordinated by Ginny Barney and Linda Readey, provided material resources, monetary donations, and hours of cleaning during a Saturday service project.

Anyone who’s come in to the house in the last month may have noticed a significant improvement in the quality of our basement, thanks to a tireless three-day effort by Grace Fellowship. Among other areas in the basement, they have greatly improved our floor space and bathroom used by so many. The renovations were completed on November 3rd, and feature a beautiful mural of “Hope” on one of our walls.

Fianna Eireann, a charity motorcycle club that is always looking to give back to the community, hosted a cookout on August 25th that coincided with the beginning of our weekend hours. The youth had a fantastic time eating and spending the afternoon with the volunteers.

In the weekends since then, we have been very fortunate to have longtime supporters Naomi Harless and Carla Novak, who, without being asked, have stepped up and began coordinating weekend meals. They have been fantastic at educating and advocating for the youth to others, including various OSU student groups along with fraternities and sororities.

Upcoming Events Benefiting Homeless Youth
We hope to see you there
We could never express to you in words how much your time and donations have helped us in the past year. You have kept our center flowing with clothes, hygiene items, tents and so much more. As we gear up for the holiday season and the coming winter, our needs persist, and we’re hopeful to continue to count on you to give what you can

**Current Needs:**

- Men's boxers (sizes M, L, & XL)
- Disposable razors (double-blade preferred)
- Book bags
- Gift cards (McDonald’s, Wendy’s, Kroger, etc) in $5 increments
- Winter coats (especially men’s)
- Boots in all sizes
- Warm winter socks
- Easy to carry snacks, such as granola bars
- Over the counter medications such as ibuprofen and non-drowsy cough syrup
- Pregnancy safe medications—Acetaminophen and Chlorpheniramine

Regardless of whether or not you are able to help provide for the house this holiday season, we would like to extend our best wishes that your holidays are filled with joy, and that your New Year brings the same hope and good fortune that we have been so lucky to experience.

*If you would like to be removed from this listserv, or know of someone who would like to be added, please contact Sam Masters at masters.104@osu.edu*