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SOS Contact:

Abby Adair, Handup Detroit Coordinator

(248) 648-1864

abby@oaklandshelter.org

HandUp Detroit Partnership Launches Platform for Donors to Directly Assist Neighbors in Need

Metro Detroit collaborative of homeless service agencies are using <http://detroit.handup.org> to offer responsible giving opportunities matched by The McGregor Fund

Lathrup Village, MI – September 21, 2016 -- The HandUp Detroit collaborative officially launches on Thursday, September 22nd, offering a powerful giving platform with matching support by the McGregor Fund. HandUp Detroit is a partnership between several Metro Detroit homeless service agencies and the online crowdfunding platform HandUp. These partnerships will allow Detroit area homeless and low income individuals to raise money for basic needs, while giving donors a responsible and compassionate way to respond to homelessness in their community.

In June 2016, the Community Foundation of Southeast Michigan and The McGregor Fund granted South Oakland Shelter (SOS) a combined \$100,000 to coordinate and launch HandUp Detroit, a collaboration to initially include: SOS, COTS (Coalition on Temporary Shelter), Neighborhood Service Organization (NSO), HAVEN and Community Housing Network (CHN).

HandUp Detroit will feature opportunities to responsibly assist clients of all agency partners. Agencies work with their clients to create personal profiles featuring their individual story, their fundraising goal, and give donors and clients the opportunity to connect directly by posting words of support and thank yous to each other. Anyone can visit <http://detroit.handup.org> to contribute to an individual's goal in rising above poverty and see ongoing updates on how they are doing. Additionally, HandUp Detroit allows partner nonprofits to track and manage money raised so donors know exactly how their money is being used.

“Neighborhood Service Organization is grateful for this exciting partnership with HandUp Detroit as it provides a powerful opportunity to our consumers, who have experienced chronic homelessness, to begin to set dreams into motion,” said Omari Taylor, VP of Corporate Development. “As NSO works to empower individuals with choice, HandUp supplies our neighbors in need the opportunity to share their compelling stories of hope, and goals for the future.”

Nicole Carbonari, COTS's Impact Partner Coordinator, said “HandUp provides a unique opportunity for parents at COTS to leverage their own network and the broader community to assist with specific financial goals that support their path to self-sufficiency.”

Several people experiencing and recovering from homelessness have achieved great successes by utilizing HandUp. One such example is Alan. A former executive, Alan found himself homeless and a guest of SOS's emergency shelter. Alan was able to raise enough funds through HandUp to pay his utility arrears -- the last thing standing in his way of moving into housing. Now housed, Alan continues to fundraise for furniture expenses: www.handup.org/members/alan.

SOS, HandUp's first midwest partner, has raised over \$76,000 for specific client needs on the site since joining in 2014. "Our mission is to end homelessness in our community, and we mean it," said Ryan Hertz, President & CEO at SOS. "But we recognize that the scale of need in Metro Detroit is far beyond our agency's capacity alone, and so when we discover innovative and impactful resources like HandUp, we do what we can to help add them to the arsenals of our partner agencies and donors throughout our community so that we may collectively assist as many people as possible."

"Collaboration is key to ending homelessness," said Sammie Rayner, COO of HandUp, "From day one, HandUp has been blown away by the leadership at SOS and their willingness to experiment and bring diverse groups together to problem solve. This collaborative will help cut through barriers for so many Metro Detroit residents. We couldn't be more excited to bring our platform to support this work."

Meghan Takashima, Housing Development Officer for the City of Detroit, said, "We are thrilled that HandUp will be expanding its model to Detroit. Integrating the crowdfunding model with existing permanent housing programs allows the community to play an active role in ending homelessness for Detroit's most vulnerable citizens."

When the site launches on September 22, 2016, the McGregor Fund matching campaign will kick-off, doubling the impact of donors' dollars to all HandUp Detroit profiles. The launch will be celebrated on Thursday, September 29, 2016 with a launch party at Great Lakes Coffee from 6-8 PM. More information on that can be found at <https://hudetroitlaunch.eventbrite.com>.

COTS exists to alleviate homelessness by providing an array of services that enable people to achieve self-sufficiency and obtain quality affordable housing. COTS also exists to advocate for long-term solutions to the problems of homelessness. Visit www.cotsdetroit.org to learn more.

Community Housing Network is a nonprofit organization committed to providing homes for people in need through proven strategies of homelessness prevention, housing assistance and development, community education and referral, advocacy and additional services. The organization carries out its work in Oakland, Macomb and Wayne counties. For the past four years it has been recognized by the Detroit Free Press as a Top 100 Workplace and in 2012 and 2014 it was honored as a Crain's Cool Place to Work. For more information, visit <http://www.communityhousingnetwork.org>.

HAVEN is a nationally recognized nonprofit that has helped domestic violence and sexual assault victims and their families escape abuse for more than 40 years. Our mission is to eliminate sexual assault and domestic violence and to empower survivors through advocacy and social change in and around Oakland County. HAVEN offers intervention, treatment, prevention, and education programs to help individuals and families through all stages of crisis. To learn more please visit <https://www.haven-oakland.org/>.

Since 1955, Neighborhood Service Organization (NSO) has been reaching out to people across metropolitan Detroit by strengthening and empowering neighborhoods, supporting families and helping people in need. Over the years, the scope and variety of services offered have grown into a network of sophisticated, vertically integrated programs that have received local, statewide and national recognition. To learn more about NSO, call (313) 961-4890 or visit our website: www.nso-mi.org.

For over 30 years, SOS has been ending homelessness for individuals and families in crisis. With an emphasis on homelessness prevention and sustainable housing solutions, SOS implements strategies and programs that provide realistic options for homeless and at-risk people seeking stabilization and self-sufficiency. Visit www.southoaklandshelter.org to learn more.

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