

Board Chair Steve Cramer Remarks at YouthLink Signature Event Regarding Retirement of Executive Director Dr. Heather Huseby

A force of nature. A fierce advocate for youth. A passionate leader. These are a few things that come to mind when I think of Dr. Heather Huseby. I have had the privilege of serving on the YouthLink board for several years, including the last three years as board chair where I have witnessed firsthand the dedication Dr. Heather has shown in her 17 years as executive director of YouthLink.

Under her leadership, YouthLink opened the Youth Opportunity Center in 2010, a collaboration of agencies providing services for young people in one location. This unique approach helps youth break down barriers they sometimes face in trying to access the resources they need on their journey to self-reliance. In 2013, YouthLink was honored with a “Best in Business” Award from the Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce for its comprehensive housing, health care, tutoring and job training services provided on site to teens and young adults experiencing homelessness.

She led a \$6 million capital campaign that allowed YouthLink to partner with Project for Pride in Living to build Downtown View, a 46 unit apartment building, and renovate YouthLink offices to include a drop in center filled with natural light. When it opened in 2018, it was named a Top Construction Project by Finance and Commerce.

In 2020, thanks to a generous \$700,000 gift from the Frey Foundation, YouthLink was able to extend its hours overnight for the first time in their 45 year history. Yes, this meant when the Stay at Home order was enacted by Governor Walz and resources normally relied upon closed, YouthLink was able to not only stay open, but remain committed to being a safe space for some of the most vulnerable members of our community day and night.

The most important thing I will remember about Dr. Heather and the thing people will say about her every time is her passion for the young adults YouthLink serves. So Dr. Heather, on behalf of our organization, the board and all of these stakeholders who have come to admire you over these 17 years, we sincerely thank you for your years of service, congratulate you on your legacy of providing for young people in our community and wish you the absolute best in your retirement and in your transition to Executive Director Emeritus. Please join me in welcoming to the stage Dr. Heather Huseby.