



**For Immediate Release**

June 19, 2019

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***Community Teamwork receives a \$250,000 grant from the Richard and Susan Smith Family Foundation to build a Youth Opportunity Center***

**Lowell, MA** - Homelessness is a persistent problem in Greater Lowell, yet services focused on this population have typically supported families and adults, with little awareness of homeless youth. CTI recently received a \$250,000 grant from the Smith Family Foundation to address this gap by developing a space to provide low barrier services and crisis intervention to homeless and at risk youth between the ages of 16-24. This multi-purpose first floor space will serve as an access point for youth to connect with resources, while providing the educational opportunities to help them achieve health, independence and stability within all aspects of their lives.

The proposed Youth Opportunity Center will provide safety, structure, and resources for a population that has gone overlooked and under-served for years. CTI will renovate the first floor of the building at 167 Dutton Street to actively meet the needs of the young adults struggling with homelessness or housing instability, with an eye to creating a trauma-informed and gender-affirming environment. The space will be available to youth to complete schoolwork, apply for jobs, and participate in workshops around life skills, financial stability, employment retention, housing and housing maintenance.

“With support from the Richard and Susan Smith Family Foundation, Community Teamwork will be able to substantially renovate the first floor of our building to accommodate the needs of these homeless youth,” stated Michael Collins, Chief Program Officer. The Youth Opportunity Center will be an integral component of the Lowell community’s larger plan to prevent and end youth homelessness and directly responds to a need for a drop-in center, which homeless youth have indicated is an important necessary resource. From a community perspective, the center will fill the current gap for a safe space geared to the unique experiences and needs of a vulnerable and historically overlooked population.

“We are pleased to help CTI bring this much-needed facility to young people who are experiencing homelessness and housing instability in Lowell,” said Richard Smith, Chair Emeritus of the Richard and Susan Smith Family Foundation. “We applaud CTI’s vision of the Youth Service Center as a place where vulnerable youth can come to feel safe and have important physical, social, emotional, and life-skills needs met.”

### **About The Richard and Susan Smith Family Foundation**

The Richard and Susan Smith Family Foundation is committed to effecting permanent positive change in the lives of the residents of Greater Boston, particularly individuals and families in economically disadvantaged communities. Today, three generations of the Smith family oversee the Foundation, stewarding approximately \$14 million annually in grants aimed at promoting greater health, educational attainment, and economic mobility. For more information, visit, [www.smithfamilyfoundation.net](http://www.smithfamilyfoundation.net)

### **About Community Teamwork**

Community Teamwork is a catalyst for social change. Our driving mission is to help people help themselves with childcare, family supports, nutrition, fuel assistance, housing, skills training, employment, financial education, and individual asset and small business development. As a Community Action Agency, a Regional Housing Agency, and a Community Development Corporation, Community Teamwork helps nearly 50,000 individuals from 63 cities and towns in northeastern Massachusetts gain greater economic independence. [www.commteam.org](http://www.commteam.org)

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