



Thank you for your consideration of this request. This project represents an opportunity for a group of our youth to be successful in life as they transition to adulthood. While we recognize foster kids aging out of the state system at 18 are not ready to make this transition successfully, that is what is happening. My kids, and most likely yours, were not ready to be on their own at 18 and they had the support of a loving family covering all their needs. Even with that support it is difficult as they moved through this stage of life. As you look at this proposal for a home base for these young people please keep them as the focus.

The **Twin Falls Optimist Foundation, Inc.** operates on zero overhead and loading; 100% of all funds go to the project. We plan to manage this project with The Optimist Club of Twin Falls, Idaho club members that have expertise in building and with community involvement. This is, and will be, volunteer time from our club. Our foundation has **\$20,000.00** from our club dedicated to this project.

This request will provide you with the following information:

- Need
- Description of Property including a Construction Plan
- Operating Plan

### NEED

Aging-out happens when a child in foster care turns the age of eighteen without a safe and permanent home. They are deemed adults and are no longer under the purview of the Child Protection Act. To date, twenty-four youth have aged-out of foster care in our area since January 1, 2015. They often leave foster care with the rights to their parents having been terminated sometime during their childhood. They have spent a significant amount of their childhood in a foster home or a group home without a home or family of their own. Often the only constant they have experienced in their life is their community.

Youth coming from foster care have had limited experiences preparing for adulthood. The life skills we learn in a home, amongst our family, are the skills that determine our success as an adult. The young adults aging out of foster care rarely have a driver's license, employment experience or even the simplest of skills such as doing laundry or cooking. Our aged-out youth are still dealing with the trauma and emotional stress they have endured before and during their time in the foster care system. They most often are developmentally delayed and have no life or coping skills to survive within our communities.

The National Youth Transition Database surveyed youth in Idaho at the age of nineteen and again at the age of twenty-one. It was reported that 47% of the twenty-one-year-old adults that had aged-out of foster care report they have been homeless over the last two years. Less than half of the youth finish high school and less than 2% obtained a college degree. The database reported one in four have been incarcerated within two years of aging-out.

Currently, we do not have a home for youth to transition to in the Magic Valley. They are left alone in a world they are not prepared for. Many youth are choosing to leave our community to go to a community that has the services and support they need. This is a decision that is difficult for them. Their community has been their constant. These young adults need the

support and guidance of their community to ensure they are successful and not only succeed but thrive as active members of our society.

### **DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY - 239 3<sup>rd</sup> AVE N, TWIN FALLS, IDAHO**

This property is owned by the Twin Falls County. It is a two-story home built in the 1900's with a full basement. It was moved to the current location by Doug Vollmer. The home retains much of its original character and has many updates. The Twin Falls Optimist Foundation made a formal request of the Twin Falls County Commissioners in September of 2017. They agreed to the requests and fully support this use of their property. We were given six months to complete a building and operating plan which we completed in three months. We have reviewed the use with the Twin Falls Planning and Zoning Department and it is a zoned CB- Commercial Central Business District and under use regulations [ j.] Residence halls, resident hotels and rooming house.

**Lease Agreement:** The lease agreement has been fully executed and signed for the remodel and operation of the home. In general, it will consist of five-year periods for consideration of \$1.00 per year. The County has a similar lease agreement that started in 2009 between Valley House, Inc. and the County for the Canyon Villa Apartments.

**Construction Remodel Plan:** The engineering, roof replacement, HVAC systems, permitting and design are completed at this point in the project and much of the plumbing, electrical, fire system, security system, framing, sheet rocking, taping and texture has been completed. The kitchen design has been completed and cabinets ordered, in addition, the finishes and furnishings have been selected. A separate report is available with the detail of each of these areas if desired. It is our goal to have the main floor and basement ready by the end of September 2018. That will allow the ladies section of the home to be occupied.

**Contractors and Construction Costs:** The remodel costs are estimates based on contractor site reviews of the property. The bones of this structure are good. Most of the remodel costs are cosmetic and not structural. The contractors completing the roof and the HVAC system, Brizee and Rainguard Roofing, have agreed to do the work at cost or better. As much as possible, we plan to use contractors that have an interest in this project for our community. Spreadsheets can be provided upon request that have been used for baseline bids and costs. Detailed spreadsheets for all finishes room-by-room have been developed. Building materials and furniture are already being donated to this project.

### **OPERATING PLAN**

A separate 501(c)(3), Twin Falls Optimist Youth House, Inc., has been set up to provide management of the day to day operations of the Twin Falls Optimist Youth House. The Board of Directors for this organization consists of subject matter experts and business leaders from our community who are all passionately concerned about this project and assisting youth in our community. Committees will be appointed to develop and implement Youth Services, Fundraising, Building Maintenance, and Regulatory and Compliance (Accounting and Reporting, Insurance, By-Laws).

The Twin Falls Optimist Youth House, Inc. Board of Directors has approved an Operating Plan with the following components:

**Program Director:** Under the direction of the Twin Falls Optimist Youth House, Inc. Board ensures operations adhere to the Operating Plan, reviews and interviews potential youth, provides direction and training to all staff and volunteers, schedules life skills classes, and oversees fundraising. Initially the Program Director will recruit and coordinate community members interested in volunteering at the Twin Falls Optimist Youth House. Represents the Twin Falls Optimist Youth House to the public by developing cross sector collaborations through working relationships with community programs, agencies, and other public systems (schools, workforce development, and public housing); however, will develop into a Volunteer

and Community Relations Coordinator position. A Subject Matter Expert group from the Community will be organized to provide support for the Program Director in addressing issues that may develop at the house. The Program Director is a paid position.

As the program grows and need requires, Case Managers may be sought who will help the youth establish goals, monitor progress in achieving these goals, and makes referrals to community based agencies and resources. Currently these duties will be under the Program Director working in conjunction with the Mentors.

**Male and Female Resident Advisor:** Live in Twin Falls Optimist Youth House and provide a key level of contact, support, and supervision to the Youth in achieving their transition plan.

**Mentors:** Build one-to-one relationship with youth to support and provide encouragement toward a successful transition.

**Fundraising:** The Twin Falls Optimist Youth House, Inc. will implement fundraising to establish blended funding streams with community businesses, civic organizations, and foundations to support the financial needs of the operation of the house.

**Transition Program:** Youth will undergo an initial screening process, followed by individualized assessments and development of a transition plan for life skills and independent living tailored to their specific needs. Youth will be required to sign a lease, adhere to House rules, attend house meetings and life skills/independent living training, meet with their mentor, and be employed and/or enrolled in school as part of their transition plan.

**Miscellaneous Services/Programs:** In addition to providing an opportunity to transition to independent living, programs will be developed to help with transportation, education, health care, and after-care following transitioning to independent living.

**Set-Up Operation Timeline:** We hope that we would be able to have all staff positions and mentors filled and trained to match the timeframe for occupation of the house. We would like to hold a fundraiser banquet near the opening of the house with the goal to raise the year's budget at that event.

#### **CLOSING STATEMENT FROM TWIN FALLS OPTIMIST FOUNDATION PRESIDENT**

Please feel free to contact me concerning this project. I would be pleased to present this information in a PowerPoint presentation. We can also provide a tour of the property at your request. Your consideration to help this community project is much appreciated. Let me know how you would like to help.

Blessings,

**Barry Knoblich**

Barry Knoblich  
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