



# FAITH'S LODGE

*a place where hope grows*

## 2012 Annual Report

***"Coming to Faith's Lodge is like Heaven on Earth for us... an opportunity to be close to our precious angel daughter. This was our second time here and it was equally as great as our first".***

### **A note from our board chair:**

Thank you to our extended family of supporters and friends!

We are proud to continue our mission of serving families coping with the toughest situations that life offers: a child's serious illness or death. Over 3,500 have walked through our doors since opening in 2007 and we are proud to have touched the lives of over 200 families over the course of the last year. We owe a debt of gratitude to the 120 volunteers that help us serve these families through the donation of their time and talent.

Exit interviews from our guests are overwhelmingly positive with almost everyone indicating Faith's Lodge helped bring hope, healing and a new connection to their lives.

A highlight of key accomplishments in 2012 include:

- A change in leadership with a new Executive Director. Kelly McDyre brings a wealth of corporate and non-profit experience and will bring continuity to a role that has been in flux for almost two years.
- An exciting 5th annual Hope Rocks event in September at Aria. The event brought together more over 700 Faith's Lodge supporters and featured music from Eric Hutchinson and Minnesota's own Martin Zellar. Faith's Lodge netted over \$100,000 and the event remains an important element for our annual revenue.
- A remembrance ceremony for all the special children who have touched our lives at the Holiday Tribute in December at the Minneapolis Woman's Club. This intimate ceremony offered moments of reflection and togetherness for families who have endured the loss of a child.

To help as stewards of your support, we are making our 2012 Annual Report available entirely online (at [www.faithslodge.org](http://www.faithslodge.org)). This allows us to direct our resources toward the parents and families we serve. If you would like to view the report in an alternative format, please contact us at [Info@FaithsLodge.org](mailto:Info@FaithsLodge.org).

And of course, we could not do any of this life-changing work without the support of our many donors recognized in the back of this report. We couldn't provide the services we do today without your support and we offer our most sincere thanks for all you do to continue our mission of serving families in their times of need.

Sincerely,  
Jadin Bragg  
Board Chair, Faith's Lodge

***“Coming to Faith’s Lodge has been an answer to my prayers. We’ve wanted a time to be able to dedicate to our daughter, a time to remember she was here.  
We are not alone in this journey and we will never forget our little girl.  
Thank you to everyone who made our stay at Faith’s Lodge possible!”***

### **Who we are...**

Faith’s Lodge is a Minnesota non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that provides a place for hope and healing for families facing one of life’s most difficult circumstances: the loss or life-limiting illness of a child. Located on 70 acres in the north woods of Wisconsin, Faith’s Lodge has been featured on the TODAY show and many other media programs, and now welcomes families from across the Midwest and across the nation. Time in this beautiful setting, together with other families in similar circumstances, provides families a unique opportunity to reflect and connect. Professional grief counselors, a wealth of holistic healing experiences, and shared activities also help families heal, renew, and re-engage with life despite the struggles. More than 120 volunteers and a wide array of generous donors provide support to Faith’s Lodge to serve approximately 700 individuals from 210 families each year. Faith’s Lodge will operate its 2013 programs with a budget of \$612,000.

### **Faith’s Lodge History:**

Faith’s Lodge was established in 2007 by a bereaved Twin Cities couple in remembrance of their daughter Faith. Since then, the beautiful Faith’s Lodge has nurtured over 1000 families who are enduring challenges they never imagined. Rooted in personal experience, Faith’s Lodge combines parent-to-parent compassion together with professional grief counseling, holistic therapeutic experiences, and fun group activities to help families heal during a time set apart from daily life.

### **Faith’s Lodge Mission and Goals:**

*The mission of Faith’s Lodge is to provide a place where parents and families facing the serious illness or loss of a child can retreat to reflect on the past, renew strength for the present and build hope for the future.*

*Our vision is that by gathering families in similar circumstances together with support, we can create transformative opportunities for healing and new hope to grow.*

Our goals are to help families through their darkest hours by creating a nurturing setting together with other parents who have experienced the same kind of tragedy or who live with the same struggles. Set apart from daily life and from others who may not understand exactly what they are going through, and nourished by the beautiful and welcoming environment, families feel emotionally safe and supported to reflect, renew, and emerge with new strength and hope.

### **Faith's Lodge Programs:**

Faith's Lodge offers an array of programs serving parents and families of children who have recently lost a child (20 weeks gestation to age 23), or who have a child with a life-limiting illness:

- **Bereaved Parents Retreats** support individuals and couples who have lost a child and choose to spend time with other parents in the same situation. Specific weeks address infant loss, loss of an older child, and needs of moms/dads.
- **Bereaved Families Retreats** support whole families who have lost one of their children. Parents bring surviving siblings and connect with other families coping with similar grief. Activities help address the needs of both parents and siblings and help bring the surviving family members together.
- **Families with Seriously Ill Children Retreats** provide a respite of "normality" and connection for the whole family free of treatments and hospitals, as well as the chance to connect with other families who understand what the family is going through.
- **Custom Retreats**, whether planned by disease- or circumstance-specific groups or simply planned by each family during "open" weeks, let families use Faith's Lodge in the way that best helps them heal.

### **Faith's Lodge Partnerships and Collaborations:**

Faith's Lodge partners with several different stakeholder groups to engage and serve families. Health care partners including Fairview Health Systems and mental health providers provide patient referrals. Nonprofits with related missions, including Ronald McDonald House Charities and various grief and loss groups also refer families to Faith's Lodge. Many family foundations and small non-profits (often established in memory of a child) leverage their impact by fundraising for expanded facilities, services and scholarships at Faith's Lodge. Membership with Community Health Charities Minnesota helps us connect with employee charitable giving and volunteer programs.

Finally, outreach to parent groups supporting a broad array of disease or circumstance-specific issues brings more families to Faith's Lodge and empowers them to customize their own programming. Faith's Lodge is accredited by the Charities Review Council and meets all standards.

### **Faith's Lodge Board, Staff and Volunteers:**

Faith's Lodge is governed by a Board of Directors chaired by Jadin Bragg. Bereaved parent and co-founder Mark Lacek serves as the vice-chair. The Board is responsible for the preservation of the mission and the financial well-being of Faith's Lodge. Daily operations are managed by a small staff including an executive director, lodge operations manager, a finance manager, development assistant, an office assistant and housekeeping staff. Contracts for grief counseling and other professional services provide additional support. Faith's Lodge is also honored by the support of more than 120 volunteers annually. These dedicated volunteers provide landscaping help at the Lodge, conduct food drives, assist in outreach and devote many hours to the annual Hope Rocks fundraising event.

***“My husband was nervous about this weekend and not knowing what to expect he had a BLAST and absolutely loved every minute of it. I think the low pressure setting is amazing for dads to share on their own terms”.***

### **The Need for Faith’s Lodge:**

When a child becomes seriously ill or dies, everything changes. Families endure challenges they never imagined. Some face months or years of exhaustive medical treatments, developing expertise they never thought they’d have and traveling on paths not of their choosing. They fight these battles even knowing the outcome may be terminal. Though many people may try to help, few understand, and times of respite or connection with others can be few.

For other parents, the whole fabric of their lives rips in an instant at the loss of a child due to miscarriage, stillbirth, infant death, accident, or illness. If anything, this experience can be even more isolating. Friends and relatives, jobs and daily lives continue on, but for the family, there is a gaping hole of loss. Parents must reconcile their need to grieve and honor their child’s passing with their equal need to take hold of renewed hope and engagement in life. Often, they feel tremendously alone.

Pain, shock and sadness often overwhelm parents and families when a child becomes seriously ill or dies. There is no clear path to follow to return to hope and life after such a tragedy. Yet this hope and healing are essential. The consequences of unhealed emotional wounds can have lifelong implications, including the breakup of families. On the other hand, emotional healing can bring parents and families back to strength and resilience for the lives that do go on. Many families need a time set apart with others who have had similar experiences where they can acknowledge their grief yet still regroup and heal enough to feel that some of the weight has been lifted. They need Faith’s Lodge.

### **Response to the Need / Program Activities:**

Faith’s Lodge was created to bring parents and families who have experienced the serious illness or loss of a child together to share their strength. Time away from home at Faith’s Lodge provides a special space where reflection, connection, and healing can occur. As the only retreat facility in the country specifically for families and parents experiencing the serious illness or loss of a child, Faith’s Lodge is a national leader in designing healing environments and activities. Eight suites can accommodate two to six people each. Key elements of the Faith’s Lodge approach include:

- **Time apart.** Breaking away from normal routines and environments sets aside time for emotional healing. Families can stay from one to five nights, once a year, for up to three years as needed. “Time apart” in retreat serves as a marker and transition point in the process of grieving for struggles and renewing strength for life.
- **Nurturing, welcoming and beautiful natural setting.** Parents and families are often hurting when they come to us. The beautiful north woods setting and welcoming buildings and staff of Faith’s Lodge enfold families in a feeling of being cared for as they experience the healing grace and quiet of nature.

- **Others with similar experiences.** Faith’s Lodge takes great care to bring together parents and families whose experiences are as similar as possible, for example, type of illness the child is experiencing or the circumstances of the family’s loss (child’s age at loss, whether the parent has other children, etc.). This close matching provides the essential element of helping participants feel emotionally safe to give and receive understanding.
- **Opportunities for personal reflection and healing experiences.** Holistic healing experiences scattered throughout the building and grounds—the Path of Inspiration, the Bridge of Hope, journals in the rooms, places to display keepsakes, heart-shaped personalized stones, therapeutic art projects, tree planting, and more—provide concrete actions that honor and celebrate loved ones.
- **Grief and loss counseling.** Parents who have lost a child experience feelings of loss. Licensed mental health professionals lead groups and provide individual attention to parents and families to help them heal, build strength, and recover hope.
- **Integration into normal life.** At Faith’s Lodge, participants are encouraged to prepare meals together in the communal kitchen, eat as a group, and participate in scheduled recreational activities even as they grieve. This blending can help parents and families get “unstuck” and re-emerge into life, even though their feelings of struggle or loss may go on. It helps give permission and hope to, once again, enjoy the simple joys of life with family and friends.

Faith’s Lodge cannot cure illness, nor can we bring back loved ones. But by giving parents and families the chance to celebrate the lives in our midst and to honor those lost, Faith’s Lodge can help preserve families and relationships by providing a path to hope and healing. Because of generous community support, we are able to make these experiences accessible for all by keeping costs to a recommended donation of \$50/night per family, with no one turned away due to inability to pay. A referral network through healthcare practitioners, mental health professionals, clergy and other nonprofits helps ensure that services reach parents and families most in need of the healing Faith’s Lodge can provide. Few of us have walked in the shoes of families facing the serious illness or loss of a child, but all of us can help surround them with compassion, hope and healing.

Faith’s Lodge is committed to ensuring that its programming accomplishes its goals of providing healing comfort and a renewed sense of hope to families. Exit surveys test the assumptions of our model. In 2012:

- 98% of families felt welcomed when they arrived at Faith’s Lodge
- 100% felt staff was responsive and easily accessible.
- 100% said the opportunity to experience the natural surroundings of Faith’s Lodge enhanced their experience.
- 98% said being around others with similar experiences was comforting.
- 100% said participation in therapeutic activities was helpful for them.
- 99% said scheduled activities provided a way to connect with others.
- 97% would recommend Faith’s Lodge to other parents and families (94% said they would do this “as often as I can”).

- 73% rated Faith’s Lodge as a 5 on a scale of 1 to 5 and 13% rated it a 4.
- 95% of participants reported feeling more hopeful after their stay – even those who rated their level of hope as a “1” upon arrival.
- 68% reported their increase in feelings of hope as a 5 on a scale of one to five and 21% gave it a 4.

Faith’s Lodge truly does have expertise that no other organization has to provide retreat-based healing experiences for bereaved parents and families coping with a child’s serious illness. We are able to sustain our programs through a robust mix of

- Individual donations
- Fundraising events
- Partnerships with health care groups to sponsor guest visits
- Private rental
- Generous corporate and foundation support

***“It is going to be sad going back in the real world where I feel a little alone and where I don’t fit in anywhere. It was nice to be surrounded by people that you didn’t have to pretend on any level.”***

### **2012 Donors \$1,000/over**

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***“We are so happy we came and were able to connect with other couples in our situation.  
Thank you to the wonderful staff for your amazing work.  
This trip was truly a hope filled and healing experience.”***

**2012 Faith’s Lodge Board of Directors:**

Jadin Bragg, Chairperson  
*Boulay, Heutmaker, Zibell & Co.*

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Dr. Robert Wieland  
*Allina Health System*

***“This is such an amazing peaceful healing experience –  
we’re so thankful to everyone who makes this place possible.”***

**Administrative Staff:**

Curt Peterson – Interim Executive Director (Jan – Aug)  
Kelly McDyre - Executive Director (Aug – Dec)  
Evelyn Nyberg – Lodge Manager  
Marquetta Nichols – Bookkeeper

**Family Grief Counselors:**

Dianna Diers  
Linda Lehmann  
Karen Peterson

**Night and Weekend Managers:**

Jane Swenson  
Carol Borman  
Kate Blochinger  
Anna Winter  
Courtney Bares  
Nancy Anderson (volunteers her time)  
Ben and Deanna Wheeler  
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**House Keeping Staff:**

Carol Borman  
Shirley Zajac

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Taylor Hienze  
Mitch Deering  
Greg McIntyre

***“Thank you for the beautiful relaxing week. We could focus all of our attention on memorializing and grieving for our son who has passed away.”***

**Statement of Financial Position**

<b>Year ending December 31</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2011</b>
<b>Assets</b>		
Current Assets		
• Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$264,942	\$358,890
• Pledges/Grants Receivables	\$10,100	\$20,150
• Prepaid Expense	<u>\$950</u>	<u>\$0</u>
Total Current Assets	\$275,992	\$379,040
Other Assets		
• Pledges/Grants Receivables	\$20,565	\$38,050
• Property/Equipment	<u>\$2,592,640</u>	<u>\$2,656,565</u>
Total Other Assets	\$2,613,205	\$2,694,615
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b><u>\$2,889,197</u></b>	<b><u>\$3,073,655</u></b>
<b>Liabilities and Net Assets</b>		
Current liabilities		
• Accounts payable	\$1,079	\$8,584
• Accrued expenses	\$8,269	\$8,290
• Debt- current	<u>\$60,565</u>	<u>\$162,600</u>
Total Current liabilities	\$69,565	\$179,474
Long term liabilities		
• Debt, net of current portion	<u>\$1,801,314</u>	<u>\$1,749,267</u>
Total Liabilities	<u>\$1,871,227</u>	<u>\$1,928,741</u>
Net Assets		
• Unrestricted Net Assets	\$989,970	\$1,059,014
• Temporarily restricted net assets	<u>\$28,000</u>	<u>\$85,900</u>
Total net Assets	<u>\$1,017,970</u>	<u>\$1,144,914</u>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b><u>\$2,889,197</u></b>	<b><u>\$3,073,655</u></b>

## Statement of Activities

<i>Year ending December 31</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2011</i>
Support and Revenues		
• Contributions	\$289,218	\$385,150
• Special events and other	<u>\$188,724</u>	<u>\$265,513</u>
Total Support and Revenue	\$477,942	\$650,663
<u>Expenses</u>		
• Lodge and Program Services (75%)	\$490,684	\$384,791
• Administration (19%)	\$127,694	\$57,982
• Development (6%)	<u>\$38,158</u>	<u>\$84,338</u>
Total Expenses	\$656,536	\$527,111
<b>Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets</b>	(\$126,944)	\$123,552
<b>Net Assets – Beginning of the year</b>	<b><u>\$1,144,914</u></b>	<b><u>\$1,021,362</u></b>
<b>Net Assets – End of the year</b>	<b><u>\$1,017,970</u></b>	<b><u>\$1,144,914</u></b>

***“We truly appreciate everything that Faith’s Lodge has offered us. This experience has been amazing and therapeutic to both of us. We are so happy and blessed to spend time here. What an amazing special place”.***