



# FAITH'S LODGE

*a place where hope grows*

## 2013 Annual Report

***"Best place we have been in a long time. Thank you for providing my family a space to heal. May God continue to bless you as you serve others".***

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

Life is rarely easy. When it comes to dealing with the serious illness or the death of a child, life becomes extremely difficult. Faith's Lodge is there for families when it is difficult, when it feels like there is no future, and when it feels like there is no hope. At Faith's Lodge, we offer those that visit us a place to escape with others walking the same journey and a place to build hope for the future. Since opening our doors in 2007, we have hosted almost 5,000 guests and during 2013 touched the lives of over 250 families. Our key accomplishments in 2013 include:

- Enhancement of the guest experience.  
*From the new check-in process to the new check-out process, we have been making notable improvements to a guest's experience. We replaced all of the beds, replaced linens, and engaged a laundry service to make sure each guest's stay is held to the highest standard. Additionally, we formed a committee to solely look at improving the counselling experience. Look for great changes to come!*
- The 6th annual Hope Rocks event in September.  
*The event, held for the first time at the Depot in Minneapolis, had a fresh look and a new format – designed to give guests the motivation, tools and opportunity to give. That, coupled with the BoDeans music, made it our most successful event since the very first Hope Rocks in 2008. Faith's Lodge netted approximately \$150,000 and remains a cornerstone of our annual budget.*
- The foray into Wisconsin to develop a stronger tie to the state in which we serve our guests.  
*As of November 2013, Faith's Lodge is a recognized and registered charity within the state of Wisconsin, opening the doors for many more grant opportunities. Additionally, we became the newest members of the Community Health Charities – Wisconsin family.*

These accomplishments and the life-changing work that Faith's Lodge does is made possible through the generous support of our many business partners, the medical community, and our volunteers who donate their time and money to Faith's Lodge. On behalf of Faith's Lodge and all of the families and people we are fortunate to serve, I offer you my sincerest thanks for your support this year.

Sincerely,  
Jadin Bragg  
Board Chair, Faith's Lodge

***“We really appreciate having this opportunity to be here with others who understand. We feel a little less angry and sad. It normalized our situation”!***

### **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 196 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 2014 programs with a budget of \$573,500.

### **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.

***“It was wonderful being able to relate (without burdening) to other parents who have lost a child. It was also great just being together as a couple. Thank you so much”.***

### **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, 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 2013:

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

- 90% rated Faith’s Lodge as a 5 on a scale of 1 to 5 and 10% 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.

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

***“We enjoyed the time to be free of schedules and expectations. This place will always have a very special place in our hearts”.***

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Loretta Sinz  
Tom & Melanie Skoglund  
Veronika Skorich  
Stephanie and Thomas Skulley  
Jeri Slachta  
Christina Smida  
Mark Smith  
David & Claire Smith  
Mike Smith  
Judith Lynn Smith Hodne  
Kelly Smithburg  
Kathryn and Kirk Smock  
Dawnette Snyder  
Rob & Laura Sobiech  
John Socha  
Kristi Soli  
Sarah and Reid Sorenson  
Melissa Sosman  
Stefanie and Lucas Sotka  
Tara and Nicholas Sowka

Marlys Spencer  
Matthew Spessard  
Kristopher Spessard  
Sandra Spessard  
Nathan & Holle Spessard  
Mike Stachowiak  
Lora Stamos  
Charles Stannard  
Glenn & Katy Starfield  
Kenneth Starkey  
Kyle Steen  
D.V. Steenson  
Jacqueline and Bob Steffel  
Jeremy Steinle  
Kandy and Daniel Stevens  
Mike and Rochelle Stewart  
Shelly Stewart  
Michael Stofferahn  
David Stofferahn  
Brian Stofferahn  
Lisa and Paul Stone  
Matthew Stonehouse  
Thomas Stordahl  
Kara Strazzanti  
Cathy Strobel  
Lucian & Tami Strong  
Thomas Stuckey  
Gloria Stuckey  
Dennis and Connie Stuckey  
Laura Stuckey  
Allison Stumpf  
Don and Kerri Svec  
Heidi Svendsen  
Joy Svoboda  
Kari Swan  
Kari Swan  
Rachel Swardson  
Jane Swenson  
Alisha & Ryan Tack  
Stephen Tanghe  
Jan Tanghe  
Anna Tauer  
Michelle and Brant Taylor  
Alan & Barb Tennessen  
Tom and Keely Teynor  
TGK Automotive  
Gregory Theis  
Laura Theis  
Marcia and Greg Thiel  
Kelly Thompson  
Thomson Reuters  
Ronald and Shirley Tiffany  
Jeff Tobias  
Eunice Tollander  
Kimberly Tonies  
Erin Toninato  
Terry & William Toops

Total Setup, Inc.  
Kayt Townsend  
Leslie and Mike Trcka  
Bobbi Trei  
Jeffery Tripp  
Sara Trokan  
Kathleen Turner  
Renaë Tveit  
Manda Tweten  
Kathy Urch  
Used Cars and Trucks for Less  
Mary and Dan Utoft  
Gail and Scott Van Zee  
Naomi Varga  
Nancy Vershey  
Kelly Vickers  
Todd Vincelli  
Carrie Voda  
Paul and Lauri Voigt  
Amy Vose  
W/ELCA First Lutheran Church in Cushing  
Joan Wachter  
Diane Waddell  
Dawn M Waddell

Timothy Waldeck  
Kristin Wallace  
Lynell Walton  
Paula & Andrew Warford  
Sue Warn  
James and Sandra Warner  
Warners' Stellan  
Laura Warrick  
Sue Weberg  
Perry and Chris Wedum  
Kimberly Weller  
Judy Wells  
Western Wisconsin Auto Auction  
Antoinette Wetzell  
Annette Whaley  
Brenda and Dan Wheeler  
Diane Whitcraft  
Louise White  
Anthony Wickner  
Robert Wieland  
Jacques L. Wiener  
Marie Lynn Willett  
William and Barbara Fadrowski  
Mark Williamson

David Williamson  
Mary Wilson  
Wine and Canvas  
Denise and Jack Winter  
Nancy Woinarowicz  
Nathan Wold  
Eileen Wolf  
Charles Wolfe  
Patricia and Douglas Wood  
Patricia Wood  
Robin Woodwick  
Briana Worke  
Glenn & Teri Woythaler  
David Wright  
Stacy Wrightsman  
Yellow Lake and River Association  
Yellow Lake Lutheran Church  
Jen Ziemer  
Lara Zuleger

### **Faith's Lodge 2013 Volunteers:**

Nancy Anderson  
Lucy Basler  
Joetta Barness  
Alex Bartels  
Cheryl Bates  
Thomas Bates  
Amy Bellend  
Marlene Black  
Kate Blochinger  
Carol Borman  
Chris Boudreau  
Prinna Boudreau  
Boulay PLLP  
Jim Bovin  
Kristen Berg  
Deb Burmeister  
John Burmeister  
Doug Crain  
Sonja Crain  
Morgan Crannell  
Karletta Crawford  
Rich Delaney  
Diepholz Family  
Carrie Delaney  
Rich Delaney  
Joel Drahos  
Karen Drahos  
Dave Elias  
Kari Elias

Marilyn Ellefson  
Bruce Estrem  
Cathy Estrem  
Denise Feldman  
Tom Feldman  
Mary Jo Fish  
Ryan Gagne  
Joe Ganley  
Theresa Ganley  
Joan Ganley  
Ryan Ganley  
Marilyn Gerrits  
Geyen Family  
Jake Geyen  
Karolyn Geyen  
Stephen Geyen  
Lynda Glasoe  
Donald Goetzke  
Laura Goetzke  
Jackson Hall  
Shelley Hall  
Billy G. Hardy  
Bridget Harsdorf  
Johnathan Harsdorf  
Leah Hauff  
HCE  
Stepahnie Heidtke  
Barbara Hyk-Zimmer  
John Hyk-Zimmer

Christine Justice  
Janet Karl  
Jamie Kastner  
Jennifer Kelly  
Judy Kotifani  
Karsyns's Krusaders  
Kathryn Krittta  
Suzie Krittta  
Mike Lofboom  
Sarah Lofboom  
Lenmark Family  
Dan and Alli Lenmark  
Kara Main  
Rob Main  
Lisa Makal  
Leah Malec  
Gary Malec  
Shannan Mantsch  
Michael Market  
Rebecca Market  
Julie McAlister  
Cullen McDyre  
McDyre Family  
Nikki McLendon  
Glen Meyer  
Ben Musburger  
Susan Nelson  
Jim Nyberg  
Elsie Mgwa

Melissa Parkos  
Rich Parkos  
Pediatric Home Service  
Shelli Pittman  
Becci Powers  
Benjamin Rains  
Kelli Ramirez  
Suzanne Rode  
Jenna Rogers  
Scott Rogers  
Jan Rossow  
Tamara Schafer  
Kim Schiller

Jenna Schulze  
Sharon Shea  
Greg Sheehan  
Karla Sheehan  
Michelle Simons  
Christina Stamos  
Katie Struble  
Dawn Swanson  
Steve Swanson  
Jane Swenson  
Karen Swift  
U S Bank Group  
Jessica Usem

Pachee Vang  
Laura Warrick  
Paul Warring  
Sarah Warring  
Andy Watson  
Priscilla Watson  
Vicki Wilson  
Deanna Wheeler  
Ben Wheeler  
Deane Whitcraft  
Lee Whitcraft

***“Thank you for providing a comfortable environment to share hurts and pains while grasping hope for the future. The lodge is beautiful and the staff was exceptional all weekend long”.***

**2013 Faith’s Lodge Board of Directors:**

Jadin Bragg, Chairperson  
*Boulay PLLP*

Alex Bartels  
*YMCA of Greater Twin Cities*

Elizabeth Costello  
*Costello-Communications*

David Elias  
*BPE Consulting*

Christianna Finnern  
*Winthrop & Weinstine*

Debbie Fischer  
*Campbell Mithun*

Joan Ganley  
*Micro Control Company*

Mark Lacek, Vice-Chair  
*Lacek Group*

Susan Lacek  
*Emeritus*

Dan Lenmark  
*Medtonic Spine*

Monica McCracken  
*SALO*

Rich Parkos  
*Best Buy*

Clint Roberts  
*One Simple Plan*

Tanya Turner  
*G2G*

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

**Administrative Staff:**

Kelly McDyre - Executive Director  
Evelyn Nyberg – Lodge Manager  
Gail Minehart – Finance Manager  
Sam Bates – Development Assistant  
Lora Stamos – Office Assistant

**Family Grief Counselors:**

Dianna Diers  
Linda Lehmann  
Robin Getsung

**Night and Weekend Managers:**

Jane Swenson  
Carol Borman  
Kate Blochinger  
Anna Winter  
Nancy Anderson (volunteers)  
Ben and Deanna Wheeler

**House Keeping Staff:**

Shirley Zajac

**Landscaping and Maintenance:**

Mitch Deering

***“We needed this more than even we can say. It’s hard to leave this place...Faith’s Lodge has been a place of peace, comfort, and sleep that we haven’t had in long time. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts”.***

## Financial Summary

Year ending December 31

	2013	2012
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Current Assets	302,220	275,992
Other Assets	2,522,712	2,613,205
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b><u>\$ 2,824,932</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 2,889,197</u></b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>		
Current Liabilities	73,996	69,565
Long Term Liabilities		
Debt, net of current portion	<u>1,758,601</u>	<u>1,801,314</u>
Total Liabilities	1,832,597	1,871,227
Net Assets		
Unrestricted Net Assets	961,235	989,970
Temp restricted net assets	<u>31,100</u>	<u>28,000</u>
Total Net Assets	<u>992,335</u>	<u>1,017,970</u>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b><u>\$ 2,824,932</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 2,889,197</u></b>
<b>STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES</b>		
<b>SUPPORT AND REVENUES</b>		
Contributions	\$ 335,400	\$ 289,218
Special events and other	<u>185,606</u>	<u>188,724</u>
Total Support and Revenue	521,006	477,942
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Lodge & Program (79%)	431,763	490,684
Administration (12%)	65,983	127,694
Development (9%)	<u>48,895</u>	<u>38,158</u>
Total Expenses	546,641	656,536
<b>INCREASE (DECREASE) IN NET ASSETS</b>	<b>(25,635)</b>	<b>(126,944)</b>
Net Assets – Beginning of the year	<u>1,017,970</u>	<u>1,144,914</u>
<b>NET ASSETS - END OF YEAR</b>	<b><u>\$ 922,335</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 1,017,970</u></b>