



### *New Youth Center Opens with Launch Event*

STAMFORD, CT (August 29, 2011) – On September 19<sup>th</sup>, St. Luke's LifeWorks will celebrate the official opening of its new Youth Center facility and Youth Services Program with a launch event featuring remarks by Congressman Jim Himes, Mayor Mike Pavia, and CEO Jason Shaplen.

**The Center will fill an essential void.** The new Youth Center will address the unique problems homeless children face such as isolation from the larger community, emotional instability, physical instability, broken families, abuse, low self-esteem etc. – all of which cause people to turn to escape mechanisms such as drugs, crime, and unhealthy relationships. The Center will provide a safe, structured place for children to do homework, receive essential tutoring, talk about pressures related to being homeless, address issues such as dating, and learn how to avoid the pitfalls that lead to intergenerational homelessness and poverty. The Youth Center will be a place where children also receive healthy snacks, learn about art and music, and participate in physical activities. In short, it will provide a structured area in which to develop and grow at the same pace as children who are not homeless.

“Children are *the most* effective way to break the cycle of homelessness,” says Jason Shaplen, CEO of St. Luke's LifeWorks. “Our goal in building this Youth Center is to ensure that children who are homeless today do not grow up to become adults who are homeless. To do this, we need to recognize the specific challenges homeless children face – and address them head on. That's what the Youth Center and our expanded Youth Services program will do. The return on the investment we make in the homeless children we serve is so high it's almost impossible to calculate.”

St. Luke's LifeWorks would like to thank the generous donors whose amazing contributions made the Youth Center a reality for children and families struggling to overcome homelessness. SLLW would especially like to thank the Vince & Linda McMahon Family Foundation, Purdue Pharma, and St. Barnabas Episcopal Church for their incredible support.

#### **About St. Luke's LifeWorks**

*St. Luke's LifeWorks is one of the largest providers of services to the homeless in the state of Connecticut and the largest in lower Fairfield County. It provides emergency shelter, transitional housing and permanent supportive housing to approximately 240 people each night. Additionally, it provides education & employment services, youth services and access to a vast array of other services such medical and dental care, in-patient substance abuse treatment, psychiatric care etc. through a network of formal, strategic partnerships. <http://stlukeslifeworks.org/>*