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Lighthouse Partners with American House to Provide Holiday Hope for Area Seniors

Pontiac, MI – Lighthouse of Oakland County is collaborating with The American House Foundation and Wayne State University's Institute of Gerontology to help seniors in need have a happier holiday season.

Hundreds of residents throughout southeastern Michigan will be positively impacted by this effort during a time when help is needed most. This Holiday Hope for Seniors program will provide food, personal items and small gifts such as clothing, bedding and small household items.

The effort is being funded by The American House Foundation, which hopes to raise more than \$50,000 for the event, says American House Owner Bob Gillette. Health Alliance Plan of Michigan (HAP) and Kroger are major sponsors. Many current residents of various American House locations across the region are also taking an active role in this program.

The Holiday Hope for Seniors program will span the Woodward Avenue Corridor. In keeping with the Lighthouse collaboration, the program is providing aid to seniors in the city of Detroit as part of Central United Methodist Church's NOAH Project.

More than 98 percent of all donations generated through the Holiday Hope for Seniors program will directly support area residents. That money is being raised by the American House Foundation, including its management, employees, residents and other donors affiliated with the American House. Of that percentage 70 percent will go toward adult seniors in need, including many Lighthouse of Oakland County clients, and 30 percent will help support Wayne State University's Institute of Gerontology.

"We understand the needs this year of the entire community are significant," said Gillette. "This community has always pulled together in difficult economic periods before and we will do so again."

Senior clients of Lighthouse of Oakland County will benefit from the Holiday Hope for Seniors Program because the assistance will allow them to become more independent and self-sufficient, said Lighthouse President and CEO John Ziraldo. Being involved in this program is an example of how Lighthouse is adapting to the current needs of the southeastern Michigan community during this holiday season.

"It's a tremendous effort and the fact that you have residents from the American House helping fellow seniors is a great story," Ziraldo said. "We're working with those Lighthouse senior clients we know very well as part of this program so we understand what their needs are. Our goal is to help get back on their feet and back on the road to independence."

Donations may be sent by check or money order to The American House Foundation Holiday Hope for Senior at 87 E. Ferry St., Detroit, MI 48202. Donors can also call Lighthouse of Oakland County at 248-920-6000, ext. 2231 or Terri Bailey at the Wayne State University Institute of Gerontology at 313-875-9048 for more information.

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About Lighthouse of Oakland County

Lighthouse of Oakland County, Inc. (LOC) has been providing services to low-income families in the area since 1972. It is a family of agencies providing a full range of services designed to move people from crisis and instability to self-sufficiency.

Lighthouse last year provided assistance to families and individuals in need on 70,000 separate occasions through three key subsidiaries: Lighthouse Community Development (LCD), which rejuvenates communities through affordable housing and educated homeowners; Lighthouse Emergency Services (LES), which provides emergency food, housing, medical, utility and other services to people who need immediate help; and Lighthouse PATH (PATH), which provides long-term housing and support to help women with children achieve self-sufficiency and a healthy family environment.

About American House

American House was founded in 1979 with the vision of providing high-quality housing for seniors at a price affordable for retirees and their families. Today, that vision of excellence and value has grown to encompass a growing number of American House locations across an array of communities, and our range of services continues to expand to meet the needs of our nation's aging population.

About Wayne State University's Institute of Gerontology

The Institute of Gerontology at Wayne State University brings together science and service to advance the cause of aging research. Its multidisciplinary faculty, post-doctoral fellows, and pre-doctoral trainees focus on the social and behavioral aspects of lifespan health and cognitive development. Dedicated to promoting successful aging, the Institute of Gerontology is where research and outreach combine to make life better in Detroit and beyond.

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