

## **zAmya Theater Project of St. Stephen's Human Services Mission and History**

In 1972, members of St. Stephen's Church began to serve people experiencing homelessness. Thirty years later, in 2002, St. Stephen's Human Services obtained nonprofit status separate from the church. With a mission to end homelessness, we serve over 8,000 each year through street outreach, homeless prevention, permanent housing, shelter, public education, employment services and more.

zAmya Theater Project was founded in 2004 by Lecia Grossman, a life coach who wanted to learn about the causes and solutions – working “with” people, not “for them”. With support from theater professionals and homeless advocates, she devised a process for bringing homeless and housed together to create theater, learn from one another and share with the broader community. After operating independently for 5 years, zAmya merged with St. Stephen's.

zAmya is a Sanskrit word that means, “aiming at peace”. zAmya supports St. Stephen's' mission to end homelessness by increasing awareness, understanding and advocacy through community-based theater. The vision for zAmya Theater Project is to be a primary source for homeless education and dialog and a leading edge method for instilling creativity and self-efficacy in organizations, communities and the homeless population. Based on the interaction between the two populations, jobs could be found by the homeless and a more socially conscious responsibility would be built in the housed.



Founded in 2004, zAmya has created and toured 10 original theater productions at numerous locations throughout Minnesota including The Minneapolis Theater Garage, Illusion Theater, Bedlam Theatre, Children's Theater, Pillsbury House Theater, Solutions Twin Cities, St. Stephen's Shelter, Salvation Army Harbor Lights, Augsburg College, The University of Minnesota, St. Paul Central High School, Brooklyn Center High School, St. Mary's University, Minneapolis Arts Teachers Conference, Minnesota Center for Photography, Minneapolis City Hall, Cabrini Partnership Annual Meeting, Eden Prairie High School, Basilica of St. Mary, St. Richard's Catholic Church, Pax Christi, Human Rights Center, Pedagogy and Theater for the Oppressed National Conference, MICAH Board Meeting, Alexandra House, Minnesota Supportive Housing Conference, Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless Annual Meeting, Help Systems, and the Hennepin County Government Center, Oak Park Community Center, the Minnesota Coalition for Homeless Annual Conference and many more.