**MEDIA CONTACT**   
Jeff Martinka,   
Executive Director  
414.933.6161 ext 125jmartinka@nh-milw.org

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**   
April 1, 2015

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**Neighborhood House To Continue Positive Engagement With Police  
Community Center’s Partnership with Local Law Enforcement Remains Solid**

**Milwaukee, April 1, 2015** --- Neighborhood House of Milwaukee has maintained a long history of positive engagement with local law enforcement which remains solid amid controversy surrounding one of its staff.

A story in today’s Milwaukee Journal Sentinel titled “*Pastor resigns after rape threat to blogger*” includes multiple citations of Neighborhood House staff member Claire Van Fossen. While the story does not mention her affiliation with Neighborhood House, Ms. Van Fossen is the blogger referred to in the report.

Ms. Van Fossen was the target of multiple, offensive, and frightening on-line threats of physical harm since the posting of a personal opinion piece on Purple Wisconsin, a collection of bloggers hosted by the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. Ms. Van Fossen’s most recent posting, taken down by the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel after accelerated postings of threatening commentary, was an opinion piece questioning the impact of policing in the community.

Neighborhood House has long fostered positive relations between local law enforcement and the often vulnerable communities we both serve. In particular, we’ve sustained nearly a dozen strong partnerships in the past year such as: listening circles with law enforcement and Neighborhood House teens; gun violence prevention initiatives with district officers; participation in the law enforcement community’s outreach with kids through the annual Badges for Baseball and Shop With A Cop programs; and hosting regular meetings with law enforcement and the refugee communities we serve. Neighborhood House remains committed to continuing its work with local law enforcement officials on behalf of participating families, children, and staff.

Neighborhood House also has a strong commitment to diversity, including diversity of political opinions. Ms. Van Fossen’s opinion pieces are just that, her own exercise of her right to express her opinions. Those opinions, made on her own time and at her own expense, in no way reflect the policies, procedures, and beliefs of this organization. Neighborhood House strongly objects to the use of social media sites to threaten physical harm to anyone for expressing their opinions.

**NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE:***Neighborhood House of Milwaukee is a community center in the settlement house tradition now in its 70th year, founded to help strengthen children and families in some of the city’s most under-served neighborhoods. The agency has touched the lives of nearly a million children and adults since 1945. Its highly regarded, award-winning programs serve infants & toddlers, school-age and teen youth, adults and families, refugees and immigrants. More at* [***www.nh-milw.org***](http://www.nh-milw.org)