

Our Saviour's Housing NEWS



Fall 2007 | Volume 1 | Issue 1 | www.oshousing.org

Resident Profile

Sometimes you just need someone to listen. That was the case with Terry, who first came to Our Saviour's Housing in May last year. His



Terry

girlfriend was already living in the shelter — and, after two years living in his van, Terry decided to join her.

He was so reserved when he came to the shelter, his case manager wondered if he really wanted to work through the issues that brought him to us. But he diligently started working on the goals they'd set together. Save money. Check. Meet

with social workers. Check. Look for a job. Check. Terry didn't reveal much. But he was making progress.

As time went on, Terry began opening up and we found there was a lot we didn't know about him. Although we knew that Terry had been through some difficult things — like two felony drug convictions and time in prison — we didn't know that Terry was very depressed. He confessed that he'd never shared with anyone all the losses he'd experienced in his life.

Terry agreed to meet with the mental health therapist that visits our shelter — and, with someone available to listen, his life started changing. He started attending therapy regularly, talking about the changes he wanted to make in his life. He worked harder to advocate for himself to garner the support he needs to end his homelessness. His eyes even started changing. He didn't keep his head down anymore when he talked — and he started smiling.

About a year ago, Terry moved from our emergency shelter into the transitional housing program. He has maintained his sobriety the entire time and he still attends therapy. He frequently says that he is "in a better place now."

Terry has begun applying to permanent housing programs designed to serve people with mental health or chemical dependency diagnoses. Pretty soon, he will move on from Our Saviour's — and his future is brighter every day — all because he had someone to listen.

Thank You Notes

Welcome to our new look!

With this newsletter, we are pleased to present our new logo and newsletter design. The logo was designed by the talented Tom Pedersen, for his internship project as a student at the Art Institutes International. We are also pleased to showcase our re-designed newsletter and nameplate by new staff member, Liz Helberg, Marketing and Communications Coordinator.

Thanks to Tom, Liz and the entire staff for their work on these projects.

Inside This Issue

2
Letter from the
Executive Director



3
Volunteer Highlights
& Opportunities



4
Wish List

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Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

Can you imagine the challenge it is to oversee a program that serves those who are homeless? Between keeping our properties in good repair, finding good staff (willing to work overnights!), setting goals that are both aggressive and realistic, finding the funding that makes it all possible, and so much more — our hands are full.

But many years ago, I learned that challenges bring joy. And you, dear readers, are part of these joys and challenges.

I am challenged as I think how we might communicate better with you. More newsletters? Paper or e-mail? A more elaborate website? Opportunities to visit and ask questions?

How can we help you know that...

...you make a real difference to the man or woman who is sleeping in our shelter tonight?

...you are truly part of breaking the cycle of homelessness that has touched too many people for too many years?

Please call or send me an e-mail. I want to hear your thoughts. And it would be a pleasure to share with you my joy at the importance of the work that we do – and that you help make happen.

Warmly,



Sandy Aslaksen
Executive Director

P.S. Thanks to the generous support of many, we exceeded the anonymous challenge grant this past August! We raised more than \$9,500 to match the initial gift of \$8,000. Thank you for meeting the challenge. What a joy!

Resident Writing Change

by T.L. Blackwell

It's all about change, where nothing stays the same.

It's all about the need for change: heart, mind, soul and spirit.

Changing like the approaching new season.

The changing of the mind from its negative thinking.

The changing of my heart from its bitter, lonely, angry feeling and hardness

towards forgiveness and doing them God's way more than one time but day by day by day by day.

The changing of my nature... the imperfect and unproductive man, to a man striving to gain the nature of love.

Until it becomes nature to understand.

Until it becomes natural to care and be willing to be helpful.

Until it becomes natural to be willing to forgive rather than condemn.

Until it becomes natural to think rather than react.

Until it becomes second nature to pray.

It's all about change.

Some people go through changes and some just don't know how to change.

Volunteer Highlights



Ever seen a pastor with purple hair? The congregation of St. Stephen Lutheran in Bloomington have. When the 3rd–6th graders at the church gave him a dare, their former Pastor Keith Magnuson stepped up to the plate. But it wasn't any old dare... it was a dare for a cause.



Pastor Keith Magnuson

The youth had heard that the residents of Our Saviour's Housing needed bag lunches. Determined they would be the ones to accomplish the mission, they soon realized they didn't have enough money to buy the groceries. What to do? What to do? Take up a collection. Their goal? Five hundred dollars... and if they met it, their pastor would let the kids paint his hair purple. To the entire congregation's surprise, not only did the youngsters raise \$500, they more than doubled it – bringing in over \$1,000 for their sandwich-making extravaganza.

Some might be surprised at what 3rd–6th graders can accomplish. But these aren't regular kids. They're the third generation of St. Stephen congregants to reach out their hands in service to OSH. They've inherited a tradition of generosity and partnership that goes back ten years.

This “heritage partnership” began in 1997 when St. Stephen's leadership was searching for ways the congregation could respond to the community's needs and work toward social change. After hearing about OSH, St. Stephen made a conscious commitment to invest both time and money — and make a true difference in the lives of people experiencing homelessness. Their first move was a capital fund drive, where a percentage of donations would be given to OSH. This permitted Our Saviour's to renovate a transitional housing facility, which St. Stephen's congregants cleaned, painted and decorated before the grand opening. Some ladies even made quilts for the new residents!

The tradition of generous partnership has continued throughout the years. Hundreds of teams have served meals at OSH's emergency shelter, others have served on the OSH Board of Directors — and recently, congregation members helped update our facilities with donations of a beautiful new freezer and a television.

St. Stephen's Director of Parish Life, Julie Magnus shared with us recently, “Our hope was that our involvement would bring about growth and renewal to our membership as we participated in the ministries of OSH. We have not been disappointed. We have gained far more than we have given.”

Including purple hair.

Volunteer Opportunities



Ever thought about coming down to help out in person?

“No experience needed!”

Here are some opportunities —

Job search volunteers

Game-night volunteer or team

Food basket deliverers

Dinner providers

Have some other special skill you'd like to share? We can use you!

Contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Maryellen Skan, for more information: 612.872.4193 x25 or volunteer@oshousing.org.

For information on how your place of worship or workplace can get involved in supporting Our Saviour's Housing, contact our Development Director, Nicole Pettitt at 612.871.5900 x3 or nicole@osom-mn.org

Children from St. Stephen Lutheran, making sandwiches for residents of Our Saviour's Housing.



Our Mission



Our Saviour's Housing provides shelter, comfort, hope and community for people who are homeless.

All of your gifts – time, materials, money – makes it possible for another person to find a warm place to sleep tonight.

Your partnership provides...

- 40 beds each night in our emergency shelter
- 2 meals a day
- Transitional housing for 10 men, 6 women and 3 families
- Case management services

Make your donation today!

Donate online at www.oshousing.org/donations.htm or use enclosed envelope.

Our Saviour's Housing is a program of Our Saviour's Outreach Ministries



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

2006 Annual Report Now Online!

Please check our website

at www.oshousing.org

OSH Wish List

holiday food baskets

bus cards or tokens

deodorant

toothbrushes

liquid laundry detergent

socks

underwear – men's and women's

razors – double-edged

Target gift cards

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