

Our Saviour's Housing NEWS



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Resident Profile

Another success story. Darcy Aldous and Gregory King are getting ready to leave Our Saviour's Housing. They'll be moving into an apartment in South Minneapolis later this week.

Unfortunately, things weren't always so hopeful for the couple. Darcy and Gregory had been looking for affordable housing for quite some time, but couldn't find anything that fit their budget. So they ended up in the shelter system. They both frequently mention the city's lack of affordable housing options, making it almost impossible to find.

In fact, their predicament is all-too common. According to a homelessness survey conducted by Wilder



Gregory King and Darcy Aldous, Former Residents

Research in 2006, "Almost one-third of homeless workers in the metro area earn \$8 to \$9.99 per hour." Given the current cost of apartments, "At this rate, a full-time worker would spend 44-55 percent of his or her gross income for a one-bedroom apartment and 53-68 percent of gross income on a two-bedroom apartment."

Darcy and Gregory overcame difficult odds. So, we asked them, "What made a difference for you?" Their quick reply: a support system. Over dinner with other residents at Our Saviour's Housing, they shared common struggles and joys. During meetings with their case manager, they got support in setting goals – and staying on track to meet them.

But a positive environment was vital, too. Daily life in a shelter can be stressful, but Gregory is quick to mention the helpful staff, the cleanliness of the building, and the "amazing dinners" provided by volunteer meal servers.

Darcy and Gregory's case manager, Derek Holt, says of the two, "There was never an option of giving up with them — always smiles and positive conversations..."

Another success story... with a reminder that behind every success is the support of an entire community and the determination to stay positive while overcoming challenges.

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Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

Construction Zone, Part 2!

In our last newsletter, I told you about the renovations to our Emergency Shelter that we expected to be complete by mid-June. Well... did I mention I'm an optimist?

Renovations being what they are, work was finally complete at the end of August. We waited for specialty materials, and then waited for the appropriate contractors to complete the installation. In the end, the building has undergone significant improvements. We are delighted and grateful to both the City of Minneapolis and Wallace Construction for their efforts. This clearly furthers our commitment to provide respectful shelter for those who come through our doors.

But before we breathe a sigh of relief... we are still not finished with construction! Some readers are aware that we experienced a major fire in our Men's Transitional House in late spring. Though a couple of men were hospitalized for smoke inhalation, all have recovered with no permanent impairment.

We remain grateful to congregational partners who immediately supported our efforts to quickly establish temporary housing for our residents. Normandale Lutheran, Edina Community Lutheran, Bethlehem Lutheran, St. Stephen Lutheran, as well as members of Our Saviour's Lutheran immediately stepped up to provide household furniture and goods.

That house is now undergoing re-building, guided by a general contractor skilled in building restoration. We are

told we will be able to move our men's program back into the house late this fall.

As for me — I remain optimistic!

Warmly,



Sandy Aslaksen
Executive Director

Resident Writing

Editor's note: Mark is a resident in the Transitional Housing Program, where he moved after living in our Emergency Shelter in early 2008.

Getting Direction

I walked away
Coming from my old home
37 years gone away

What a change now
I needed help to be healed
What I was told —
Follow guidance, love, and trust
It all worked for me.

Most of all... I told my story
What had happened...
then I got my needs met
A home, health, and a life —
the necessities.

In my forward path,
I move daily to help others
I need and I receive
Life for me is better today
OSH helped me in every way

To all that give — thank you!

Volunteer Highlights



Editor's note: In this issue, Pam Balthazor, a volunteer in our Employment Resource Center, shares her experiences.

Every night is different at Our Savior's Housing's Employment Resource Center (ERC). Meet Steve*. A tall, lanky 40-something former telemarketer with an engaging smile, he's a typical client with a sporadic work history. He dreams to get in to sales and has a plan to get there.

But first, he needs a temporary job in order to secure housing. After reviewing his prior employment, education and interests, I get to work creating a résumé. In the meantime, Steve searches the internet using a list of websites provided by the ERC.

Steve shares his concerns with me — a fallout with his boss and regular challenges with authority. Past references may be weak and his independent streak needs to be factored in to finding the right job.

After brainstorming some solutions, he leaves the ERC with a fresh résumé, a commitment to call hot prospects, and a pamphlet covering the “how-to's” of discussing a prior criminal record with potential employers. He's positively energized.

Challenges with ERC clients are common — criminal records, low literacy levels, mental health and limited education. But our philosophy is that anyone is employable, if they are willing to try.



Pam Balthazor, Employment Resource Center Volunteer

Sometimes it's the simple ERC tasks that make a difference — helping residents find the right clothing or set up an email account, sharing some interview tips or just posting open positions so residents can see them. You never know what might click.

What keeps me coming back? The variety, the fascinating people and the opportunity to provide resources to those in need. I am transformed as soon as I walk through the door. No longer just an ID card-carrying member of corporate America, at Our Saviour's Housing, I am “The Job Lady” — and my mission is to connect residents to employment and provide hope for a brighter future.

**name changed to protect confidentiality*

Volunteer Opportunities



Ever thought about coming down to help out in person?

Here are some opportunities for individuals or small groups:

- Employment Center volunteers
- Shelter aides
- BINGO night helpers
- Breakfast providers
- Lunch makers

Have another skill you'd like to share? We can use you! Contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Maryellen Skan, 612.872.4193 x25 or volunteer@oshousing.org.

Our Mission



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

All of your gifts – time, materials, money – make 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!

OSH Wish List

bus cards
ear plugs
razors (double edge preferred)
socks
new underwear (men's & women's)
deodorant
shower sandals
washcloths (new & used)
towels (new & used)
toothpaste (travel-size)
TV (24" or 32")
DVD player

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



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