

Dear Friends,

In honor of National Volunteer Appreciation Week (April 12-18), Grace House will recognize its dedicated corps of volunteers through the **Annual Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon**. This event will be held at Grace House from **Noon to 2:00 p.m., Saturday, April 18**.

Our Board of Directors will serve up mouth-watering lasagnas, salad, garlic bread and homemade cake. Certificates of appreciation, personalized gifts and door prizes will be presented to our faithful volunteers while Olivia & Katilin Skaja wow us with beautiful, instrumental classics.

Here's a look at our 2014 volunteer statistics:

- 9,000 hours of service was contributed by our kind-hearted volunteers.
- 6,987 home-cooked meals were prepared and served.
- 166 volunteers filled one or more daily shift at Grace House.
- 150 church volunteers were trained for overnight shifts during the first overflow shelter cycle.
- 59 volunteers have been volunteering at Grace House since its inception in 2006.
- 7-91 years is the age range of our active volunteers.
- 4.5 full-time staff members would need to be hired to carry out the work our extraordinary volunteers perform on a daily basis.

Thanks to the generous spirit and compassion of our volunteers, 200 individuals received safe, temporary shelter at Grace House or at one of our Winter Overflow Sheltering Plan (WOSP) church sites. The friendly interactions between guests and volunteers are catalysts for so much more than food and supervision; they offer guests valuable social connections with caring members of the community and help restore a sense of acceptance and inclusion during an otherwise alienating period of their lives.

Did you know that **62 percent of our guests left Grace House to move into stable, permanent housing last year?** As they moved from our shelter into houses and apartments in the community, they transitioned from being our guests/clients to our neighbors. The seeds of compassion planted by our volunteers sprout in the hearts of our guests and help our community flourish.

Best wishes,

Sherry Shadley

Executive Director

Kids Care About Homelessness, By Elana Warsen

It's not every day a seven-year-old thinks about the needs of those less fortunate—let alone on her birthday. But that's exactly how Kate Swenson decided to celebrate her big day this January. For her birthday party, Kate planned lots of fun for guests, as well as a unique fundraiser for Grace House. Her party invitation bore the following thoughtful phrase: ***"In lieu of presents, please consider donating to Kate's favorite charity: Grace House."***

The response was fantastic! Kate's friends donated money to Grace House, and her mom's employer—Lakes Area Credit Union—made a matching donation. Grace House staff and guests were touched by Kate's gesture. We wanted to know more about the thoughtful girl who decided to share her birthday bounty with people in our community who are experiencing homelessness. Kate visited the shelter to see the impact her donation would have and to explain why she decided to use her birthday as a way to raise money for Grace House.

Kate's involvement with Grace House began back in 2013 when her sister outgrew her bassinet. "My baby sister didn't need to sleep in it anymore. We heard there was a family with a baby at Grace House, and we got the idea to give it to them," she recalls. Kate's mom admits that parting with an item as sentimental as a bassinet was emotionally difficult, but that donating it to a family in need was a joyous experience. So when it was time to celebrate Kate's birthday this year, the Swensons were excited to donate once again.

When asked what she hoped her donation would provide for Grace House guests, Kate replied, "Toys for kids, and food and clothes for grownups and kids." She also wanted to make sure her donation helped provide shelter for everybody who needed it. Kate had a message for the 32 children served by Grace House in 2014: **"I want them to know that people care about them,"** she said.

We are thankful to Kate, one of our youngest donors, for her kind and creative contribution to Grace House.

Important Dates to Remember:

April 18—Noon to 2:00 p.m.: Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon

April 27 @ 1:00 p.m.: Coffee, Chocolates & Conversation—afternoon volunteer support meeting

April 28 @ 5:30 p.m.: Coffee, Chocolates & Conversation—evening volunteer support meeting

May 4 @ 1:00 p.m.: Church Coordinator Meeting

May 11 @ 5:30 p.m.: Volunteer Orientation & Training

Top 5 Critical Needs List:

1. New Flip-Flops (Bed Bug Prevention)
2. Sports Bras (Medium to X-Large)
3. Dry Erase Markers

4. Chairs for Guest Dining Area
5. XXL to XXL Scrubs Sets