

 June 11, 2014 Volume II: Issue 8

Dear Friends,

***“Never stop doing little things for others. Sometimes those little things occupy the biggest parts of their hearts.”*** This quote by Indian writer Ritu Ghatourey prompts us to consider how even the smallest of gestures or acts of kindness can have a profound impact on the lives of people we meet.

Providing emergency shelter gives Grace House volunteers the opportunity to make a positive difference in the lives of our guests on a daily basis. Through your assistance, Grace House has already provided shelter for more than 100 adults and children since January 1, 2014.

Over the past three months, dozens of church volunteers offered emergency shelter to 47 additional guest through the new overflow shelter program. There’s no doubt these volunteers have touched the hearts of the guests who’ve found solace and refuge at their churches.

We’d like to recognize the following overflow shelter church coordinators for their excellent logistical and volunteer coordination: Anne & Dave Dimich (Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Cohasset); Dave Roerick (St. Joseph Catholic Church); Gina Pittack (Community Presbyterian); Martha & Mike Lentz and Dave Strock (United Methodist); Mary Fultz (Solid Rock Church, La Prairie); Myrna Peterson (St. Andrews Lutheran Church); Deb Junker & Shelia Woodworth (Grand Rapids Alliance Church); and Peg Christensen (who serves in a dual role as Zion Lutheran Church Coordinator and Grace House Volunteer & Community Outreach Coordinator).

Summer always brings the highest demand for emergency shelter. As the overflow shelter season draws to a conclusion on June 28, we’ll have no alternative shelter to offer when Grace House is full. As a result, the number of people who will have to be turned away will likely skyrocket.

In addition to volunteering, there’s another way you can make a big difference in the lives of people who are experiencing homelessness in our community. If you belong to a service club, fraternal organization or church group, please consider sponsoring a tent and sleeping bag drive for those who are turned away from Grace House this summer. For more information, go to the Sponsor A Drive page on our website **www.gracehousemn.org**. You may also contact Administrative Assistant Jen Poore at (218) 326-2790 or email her at jen@gracehousemn.org.

Thanks for all the big and little things you do to positively impact the lives of Grace House’s guests.

Best Wishes,

Sherry Shadley

Executive Director

**Spotlight on Staff:**

While the new overflow shelter program has doubled Grace House’s service capacity, it has also increased the workload of Grace House’s staff tenfold. Intaking, supervising and providing case management services for up to 20 guests per day can be overwhelming. But, our staff has handled the added pressure with patience, professionalism and perseverance. I am deeply grateful for their commitment to Grace House’s mission and our guests. So, this month the spotlight is focused on them:

**Tara Venema** has been with Grace House since November 2011. She recently celebrated her one year anniversary as Grace House’s Program Director—a role she was born to play. In addition to her many duties, Tara ensures the shelter is properly staffed, adequately stocked with food and building supplies, and compliant with H.U.D., Office of Economic Opportunity and MN Department of Health regulations.

**Jen Poore** has served as Grace House’s Administrative Assistant for more than a year now. Jen has played a pivotal role in the development of training manuals for staff and overflow shelter volunteers. She’s streamlined guest intakes and case management procedures, and improved Grace House’s overall organizational effectiveness. Jen is an administrative genius and a true asset to the shelter!

Site Supervisor **Heidi Madsen** will celebrate her second anniversary at Grace House at the end of this month. We joyously welcome her back after a two-month leave of absence. We’ve missed Heidi’s compassionate nature, sunny personality and can-do attitude. She also recently graduated from ICC with an Associates of Arts degree in Psychology. We’re so proud of you, Heidi!

Site Supervisor **Jessica Mohn** has been employed at Grace House since October 2014. Jess is well known for her boundless energy, positive attitude and dedication to helping others in their journey toward recovery and self empowerment. She facilitates two weekly Narcotics Anonymous (NA) meetings at the shelter, and recently completed the Personal Empowerment Program through Circles of Support.

**Scott Schuman** joined our team of site supervisors in January 2014. Scott has volunteered extensively at homeless shelters in the Twin Cities metro area, and worked at a hospice for chronic inebriates. Scott’s wonderful sense of humor and vast management experience makes him a delightful addition to our staff.

**Peg Christensen** was hired in March 2014 as Volunteer & Community Outreach Coordinator. She’s done a fantastic job coordinating the overflow shelter plan, which has been running seamlessly under her leadership. In spite of her busy schedule, Peg still finds time to fill at least four overnight shifts at Grace House each month. She also serves as Pastor of Clara Lutheran Church in Deer River.

Newcomers **Teresa Linn** and **Pam Dowell** round out Grace House’s site supervisor team. Both possess unique attributes that make them a natural fit for the job. Teresa has worked as a licensed nurse and foster care provider, and owned an assisted living facility. Pam was a licensed police officer until she was injured in-the- line-of-duty. She has provided direct care at area group homes and served as a case manager at Wellstone Family Safety Center. Welcome to our Grace House family, Teresa & Pam!

**Important Dates to Remember:**

**June 23 @ 5:30 p.m.—** Coffee, Chocolate & Conversation evening volunteer meeting

**June 24 @1:00 p.m.—** Coffee, Chocolate & Conversation afternoon volunteer meeting

**July 7 @ 1:00 p.m.—** Church Coordinator Monthly Meeting

**July 14 @ 5:30 p.m.—** Monthly Volunteer Orientation Training

**Top 5 Critical Needs List:**

1. Flowers for our flower beds 4. New men’s boxers or briefs (sizes M & L)

2. Men’s cotton or linen pajama pants (M, L, XL) 5. New or gently used T-shirts (sizes L, XL, XXL)

3. Hamburger (**80% lean ground beef is on sale for** **$2.99/lb. at Cub Food’s** **this week**)