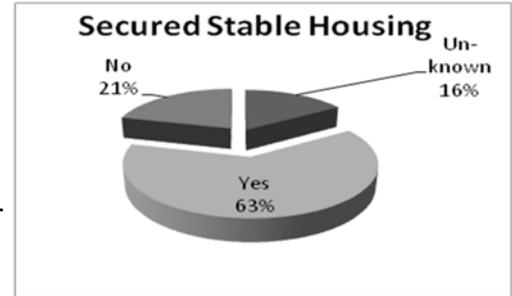


# GRACE HOUSE OF ITASCA COUNTY 2012 ANNUAL REPORT

Dear GRACE House Friends & Supporters,

December 26, 2012 marked the first anniversary of operation in GRACE House's new home. 2012 was filled with exciting transitions and opportunities for GRACE House whose mission is *to provide safe, secure housing for people in Itasca County needing temporary shelter.*

In a short time span, GRACE House has built a solid reputation as one of **Minnesota's most successful homeless shelters.** By offering direct case management services, individualized attention and assistance from staff, and connections to community resources, our guests are becoming increasingly successful in obtaining stable housing and employment. We are proud to report that 63 percent of our guests secured housing by or before the end of their 30-day stay at GRACE House in 2012.

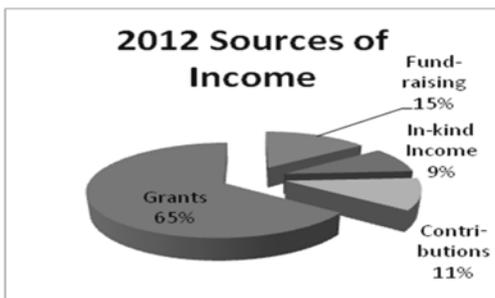


Our new facility makes GRACE House a valuable community resource, serving as a host site for meetings and educational events facilitated by: NE Minnesota Continuum of Care, Housing Issues Advisory Committee, Release Advance Planning Team, Grand Rapids North Star Women's Club, Kootasca Community Action's Teenage Parenthood Program, and Alcoholics Anonymous.

In 2012, we participated in community events, such as Minnesota Assistance Council's Veterans Stand-Down and Itasca County's Community Connect, to promote programs and services intended to help individuals and families move out of homelessness. GRACE House also took on a leadership role in the planning and execution of the 2012 "Homeless Awareness Hoedown" and "One Night without a Home" events to raise public awareness of homelessness in Itasca County.

Operating as a stand-alone homeless shelter also produced challenges such as higher operating costs and damages of \$15,000 to our building following the July 2 storm. Many lessons have been learned as well. Homelessness in Itasca County has increased by 22 percent. Families represent the fastest growing segment of our homeless population and the number of children served by GRACE House has more than doubled since 2011. Also, the number of individuals who were turned away in 2012 due to a lack of available beds tripled in the past year.

We also learned just how incredibly generous this community can be. In 2012, GRACE House received substantial financial support from individual donors, faith-based organizations, service clubs, governmental units and private foundations, such as the Blandin Foundation.



Sponsorships and contributions from area businesses buoyed our fundraising efforts and contributed to the overall success of our annual "Home is Where the Heart Is" dinner dance.

In-kind food donations from local churches, professional caterers, pizzerias, Second Harvest Food Shelf, and Ruby's Pantry help keep GRACE House's grocery expenditures to a minimum.

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The Charity & Justice Commission of St. Joseph's Catholic Church recently established a Children's Fund for GRACE House to help meet the needs of children who are adjusting to the loss of home and familiar surroundings. This new fund will provide financial resources that allow parents to purchase necessities for their children, such as medication, appropriate footwear, and other items during their stay at GRACE House. St. Joseph's Charity & Justice Commissioners hope to recruit other area churches for participation in ongoing fundraising activities to replenish and grow this new endowment.

Our dedicated volunteer corps continues to serve as the lifeblood of GRACE House as they comprise 50 percent of our workforce. More than 120 community volunteers filled 1080 site supervision shifts, served 5711 meals, and provided compassion and conversation to the 211 guests who stayed at our shelter last year.

Volunteers from GRACE House's newly established Saturday Cooking Club spent the last quarter of 2012 preparing and freezing nutritious meals when the shelter was operating at maximum capacity.

Now that a permanent home has been secured, our attention will be focused on the next stage of GRACE House's organizational development. Over the next 12 months, we plan to:

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**Itasca County Residents**



- Secure funding to provide on-site training opportunities for GRACE House guests that enhance employment skills, increase self-sufficiency and self-confidence, and lead to successful housing and job placements;
- Heighten communication and collaboration with Kootasca Community Action, Salvation Army, Northland Counseling Center, Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency, and Access to Employment to more effectively and readily serve individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness;
- Strengthen partnerships within the community to develop and implement long-term solutions for decreasing homelessness in Itasca County and beyond;
- Improve outreach to area churches to recruit new volunteers and help area faith communities achieve their missions of serving people in need; and,
- Identify and obtain new sources of funding to lay the foundation for long-term financial sustainability.

We continue to be grateful to our dedicated board of directors and staff at GRACE House. They are Vicki Andrews, Larke Huntley, Kay Klingman, Pat Medure, Ron Oleheiser, Madelen Schuemann, Steve Teff and Jenny Wettersten, board members; and Ami Bolster-Reed, Tara Venema, Tiffany Beckman, Heidi Madsen, April Christensen, and Mike Glen, staff members.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for supporting GRACE House. Your donations of time, food, goods for our guests and financial contributions have meant the world to the people we serve.

2013 promises to be an exciting year of transformation and growth. We count on and look forward to your continued involvement and support!

Sherry Shadley  
Executive Director

Barb Sanderson  
Board President

