

# GRACE House Gazette

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Dear Friends,

Springtime is a time of growth and change. As the snow melts and flowers begin to bloom, we're looking forward to a couple of major changes at GRACE House. Through the creative design of Itasca Community College (ICC) engineering students, a children's playground will be installed on the grounds of GRACE House this summer.

In December 2012, ICC Engineering Program Department (EPD) students elected to research and design a playground that will benefit children during their stay at GRACE House. The students spent countless hours researching the type and cost of materials needed to design a safe, yet interactive playground.

Their final design concept includes:

- ❖ A jungle-gym platform featuring monkey bars, small rock climbing wall, and spiral slide
- ❖ A teeter-totter
- ❖ Sandbox
- ❖ Swings
- ❖ Playground accessories including a canopy, telescope, and steering wheel

Playground construction costs are estimated at \$2,400, not including excavation and fencing. Some of the money in GRACE House's newly-created Children's Fund will be applied to the playground project. We need your help to bring the EPD students' design to fruition. If you're interested in contributing time or money to make the playground a reality, please call Administrative Assistant Tara Venema at (218) 326-2790 or email her at: [tara@grgracehouse.org](mailto:tara@grgracehouse.org).

GRACE House is 1 of 16 nonprofits in Northeastern Minnesota to receive free paint from the Valspar Foundation. This in-kind grant will enable us to paint the shelter's exterior, and give the facility a much needed facelift. We'll need 20-25 volunteers to get the building painted in one day. A volunteer painting party will be scheduled sometime this June.

I really hope you plan to join us from Noon until 2:00 p.m. this Saturday, April 13, for GRACE House's Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon. In addition to mouthwatering lasagna and homemade pies, our board will distribute door prizes and volunteer appreciation gifts. Come for the food—stay for the fun. I look forward to seeing you there.

Thank you for your continued involvement and support,

*Sherry Shadley*

Executive Director

### **Volunteer Spotlight:**

This month we salute Leona Barten for her outstanding volunteer work at GRACE House. Leona has been an avid volunteer since GRACE House's inception in 2006. She typically works the breakfast shift, but she makes herself available to fill an afternoon/evening shift whenever needed. Leona also serves as one of our most successful church week coordinator, proficiently recruiting other parishioners to fill shifts during St. Augustine's week.

In addition to her work at GRACE House, Leona can be found volunteering at Community Café as well as a number of events held at St. Augustine's Church. She's been an active member of Christian Council of Women, and has served in the role of President. Leona also actively participates in international mission trips to help build houses for families in need.

Thank you, Leona; for all that you do for GRACE House and our community. You are a treasure!

### **Trevor's Story:**

When he sheepishly walked into the shelter a few weeks ago, we steeled ourselves, expecting to hear Trevor ask, "Can I come back?" Trevor had been a GRACE House guest several times in the past few years. Major depression made it difficult for Trevor to hold down a job and maintain an independent lifestyle.

Imagine our surprise when Trevor looked up, eyes sparkling, and said, "I just wanted to thank you for giving me a second chance, and for being tough on me when I wasn't following the rules. I'm living in adult foster care now, and I love it!" We could not have asked for a better ending to his story than that.

### **Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities:**

April is National Volunteer Month. With that in mind, please help us grow our volunteer pool by recruiting a family member, friend, or maybe someone from work or church. The next Volunteer Orientation & Training sessions will be held from **5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. on May 13 and June 10.**

**Saturday Cooking Club Volunteers**, please join us this Saturday, April 13, immediately following our Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon. We'll cook up tasty casseroles and main entrees for our future guests.

### **Top Five Critical Needs List:**

Oftentimes, our guests make their way to GRACE House with only the clothes on their back. For individuals who have been homeless for several days (or longer), the idea of taking a hot shower and changing into clean clothing seems like a little slice of heaven. A lack of storage space limits our ability to accept clothing donations. However, we do try to keep basic necessities on hand. After five months of operating at full capacity, many of our resources are now depleted. We are currently accepting the following donations: **(New Only Please)**

1. Men's & Women's Socks
2. New Jogging Pants (M, L, XL)
3. New T-shirts (L, XL, XXL)
4. Men's Deodorant
5. Men's Boxers & Women's Underwear