



GRACE HOUSE

February 10, 2012

GAZETTE

Volume II: Issue 4

Dear Friends,

January ushered in a flurry of activities at Grace House as two new programs designed to reduce and prevent homelessness were introduced. Funding from Open Your Heart to the Hungry & Homeless, Blandin Foundation and Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation afforded Grace House the opportunity to collaborate with our local faith community to provide additional emergency shelter this winter.

We continue to be amazed by the enthusiastic support of the churches that have eagerly agreed to serve as Winter Overflow Shelter Plan (WOSP) host site facilities when Grace House is full. Over the past month, we've been thrilled by the number of volunteers who have turned up in full force to learn how best to accommodate WOSP guests in their churches. We've already trained more than 130 overflow shelter volunteers, and seen an average of 30 volunteers participating in WOSP training at each church! It's been an awe-inspiring experience to see compassion and the desire to help others quickly replace any uncertainties these new volunteers may have about working with people who are homeless.

We'd like to express our gratitude to faith leaders and volunteers for opening their churches and their hearts to help provide shelter for all of those in our community who have no home of their own this winter: Zion Lutheran, St. Joseph's Catholic Church, St. Andrews, Our Redeemer Lutheran in Cohasset, United Methodist, Community Presbyterian and Solid Rock Church in La Prairie.

Starting February 12, we will begin offering workforce and independent living skills classes to current and former guests at Grace House through the Self-sufficiency Training for Reaching Independence & Vocational Empowerment (STRIVE) Project. Grants from Northland Foundation, United Way of 1000 Lakes and Blandin Foundation will enable Grace House guests to participate in a variety of onsite classes including: resume writing, job interviewing skills, basic money management, nutrition & cooking, time management and computer literacy.

We are in need of guest instructors who would be willing to volunteer their time and expertise to teach some of the STRIVE Project, which will be incorporated into our guests' mandatory housing and employment plans. Specifically, we're looking for volunteers to teach classes in: basic computer skills, completing job applications, employment opportunities for individuals on Social Security Insurance & Social Security Disability Insurance, grocery shopping on a budget, time & organizational management and parenting. If you are interested in sharing your expertise in these subjects with our guests, please contact me directly at (218) 326-2790 or sherry@gracehousemn.org.

I hope you will continue to support Grace as we strive to make 2014 another exciting year of positive growth and personal transformation for our both our guests and awesome volunteers!

Sherry Shadley

Executive Director

February Volunteer Spotlight

This month, we salute long-time Grace House volunteer, Dan Duffy for his service to Grace House. Known fondly for his delicious, homemade French toast breakfasts, Dan has been volunteering for the 6:00 to 8:00 a.m. shift 3-4 times a month since 2008. In addition to his fantastic cooking, our guests enjoy Dan's compassionate nature and excellent conversation skills. Before he retired, Dan worked as a corporate auditor for the Internal Revenue Service for 31 years. He serves as the Finance Director for United Methodist Church and volunteers his time at Community Café and Hospital Visitor Program in Grand Rapids, MN. Volunteering at Grace House is a common theme in the Duffy household. Dan's wife Marie is one of our most trusted and dependable overnight volunteers. She can be counted on to fill unassigned shifts, often without advance notice. This dynamic duo also recently signed up to serve as WOSP volunteers during United Methodist's designated weeks. Thank you, Dan & Marie, for making Grace House a priority in your family's volunteer commitments!

Oral History of Homelessness Exhibit Coming to MacRostie Arts Center in March

Grace House of Itasca County and Grand Rapids Human Rights Commission have teamed up with MacRostie Arts Center to sponsor a series of events in March promoting the Oral History of Homeless Project. This poignant, educational art exhibit will be at MacRostie Arts Center throughout March 2014.

Begun in April 2008, the Oral History of Homeless Project documents homelessness in Minnesota through first-person narratives and portrait photography. Interviews and portraits of individuals and families experiencing homelessness provide powerful stories of the daily lives, challenges, and success in overcoming the most extreme form of poverty in this socioeconomic era.

MacRostie Arts Center (MAC) has secured "Homeless is My Address—Not My Name", a traveling exhibit consisting of 50 hard-back photos of homeless individuals. Twenty-five of these portraits are accompanied by phone numbers enabling viewers to dial in (using a cell phone) to hear stories of abject poverty, hopelessness, survival and triumph. MAC will host an Opening Night Reception from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. on Friday, March 7. At 6:00 p.m., Nikki, a former Grace House guest, will share her personal experiences of being homeless before successfully transitioning to stable housing and independence.

Please mark your calendars for these important dates:

February 25 @ 1:00 — Afternoon Volunteer Support Meeting

February 27 @ 5:30 p.m. — Evening Volunteer Support Meeting

March 7 from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. — Opening Night Reception of the "Homelessness is My Address—Not My Name" exhibit at MacRostie Arts Center, 405 NW 1st Avenue, Grand Rapids.

March 10 from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. — Grace House Volunteer Orientation Training

March 13 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. — Homeless Awareness Open House at Grace House. Homemade soups and breads will be served.

March 27 from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. — A Community Conversation on Homelessness at MacRostie Art Center, featuring Cathy ten Broeke, State Director, The Office to End Homelessness in Minneapolis & Hennepin County.

Top 5 Critical Needs List:

1. Coffee Bean Grinder
2. Ground Beef, Turkey, Venison & Pork
3. Floor Cleaner (64 oz. or larger)
4. Twin-Size Zippered Mattress Covers
5. Zippered Pillow Covers