

Dear Friends,

Now that spring has finally arrived, it's the perfect time to head to MacRostie Arts Center to see *Homeless is My Address, Not My Name*. This traveling art exhibition combines beautiful black-and-white portraits with oral histories of Minnesotans who have experienced homelessness during their lifetimes. Half of the 50 portraits are accompanied by phone numbers enabling viewers to use their cell phones to hear firsthand accounts of poverty, hopelessness, survival and triumph.

The exhibit's March 7 Opening Night Reception drew more than 75 spectators. The reception's audience was spellbound when two local residents (including a former Grace House guest) bravely shared intimate details of their lives that led them to becoming homeless. Familial alienation, toxic relationships and mental health challenges were common threads woven through their very personal testimonies.

I sincerely hope you have the opportunity to see *Homeless is My Address, Not My Name* while it's on display at MacRostie Arts Center this month. The oral histories documented through this poignant exhibit closely mirror those that our guests have shared with Grace House's staff and volunteers.

A little more than two years ago, Grace House moved out of Zion Lutheran Church and began operating as an independent homeless shelter at the former Jehovah Witness Kingdom Hall Church. Our new home offered greater privacy and security, while giving Grace House the physical space needed to develop homeless prevention programming.

In observation of Grace House's second anniversary in the new facility, we invite you to attend our Open House celebration, which will be held on Thursday, March 13 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. The event includes an old-fashioned soup line and tours of what has been described as the "Cadillac of homeless shelters in Minnesota." Grace House staff and board members will also be on hand to discuss onsite programs and services that help our guests secure stable housing and employment and lead more self sufficient lives.

As homelessness continues to rise in Itasca County, the need for long-term prevention strategies has intensified. The Grand Rapids Human Rights Commission is partnering with Grace House to bring Cathy ten Broeke to MacRostie Arts Center on Thursday, March 27. As director of The Office to Prevent & End Homelessness, Ms. ten Broeke will present *Heading Home: Minnesota's Plan to End Homelessness* at 7:00 p.m. This is a terrific opportunity to hear strategies and action steps Minnesota is undertaking to prevent and eliminate homelessness. Please mark your calendars for this important presentation.

Best Wishes,

Sherry Shadley

Executive Director

Top 5 Critical Needs List:

Every issue of the *Grace House Gazette* includes our Top 5 Critical Needs List. Quite often, you will see the same items highlighted in the newsletter. What's the reason for this duplication? The answer is simple: supply and demand.

On average, it costs nearly \$16,000 per month to operate our shelter. As a result, our food budget is pretty limited. **Meat is one item that is always in high demand, but rarely in supply at Grace House.** A couple pounds of meat go a long way in feeding our guests three daily meals. The next time your favorite grocery store has a sale on hamburger, pork or beef roasts, ground turkey or chicken, I hope you'll consider donating a portion to Grace House.

Other items that are frequently in short supply at Grace House include:

- Fresh produce (celery, lettuce, tomatoes)
- Plastic, zippered mattress protectors (twin-sized)
- Cheese
- Floor cleaner

Thanks to generous supporters like you, in-kind food and product donations accounted for nearly 20% of our 2013 operating budget! These tax-deductible donations really make a difference to Grace House.

Please Mark Your Calendars for These Important Dates:

March 2014: *Homeless is My Address, Not My Name* Exhibit @ MacRostie Arts Center

March 13 from 5:00-7:00 p.m. — 2nd Anniversary Open House @ Grace House

March 25 at 5:30 p.m. — Evening Volunteer Support Meeting

March 27 from 7:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. — *Heading Home: Minnesota's Plan to End Homelessness* presented by Cathy ten Broeke @ MacRostie Arts Center

March 28 at 1:00 p.m. — Afternoon Volunteer Support Meeting

Volunteer Spotlight: Candy Miller

While her family was featured in the August 2013 *Grace House Gazette*, Candy Miller singularly deserves recognition in this month's Volunteer Spotlight. When many of our volunteers headed south for the winter, Candy quickly helped fill the void by switching from the afternoon/evening shift to overnights. On several occasions, she has saved the day by covering additional overnight shifts when other volunteers became ill or had last-minute conflicts. In addition to Grace House, Candy volunteers for First Call for Help 2-1-1 and Wood for Fuel. She helps stretch the food budgets of many local organizations by picking up unclaimed food shares at Ruby's Pantry, and delivering them to Grace House, Community Café, Kiesler House and Midway Villa. She recently added KOOTASCA's Peer (Men's) House to her Ruby's Pantry distribution list. A retired IDS #318 custodian, Candy's days are spent homeschooling grandson Anthony. Whether it's dicing up 50 lb. bags of onions, cooking nutritious meals at the shelter or teaching our guests food canning safety, she has become an indispensable Grace House volunteer. Thank you, Candy. You're great!