



SPRING 2019

ST. STEPHEN'S

Ending Homelessness

news

Home, Sweet Home

If you ask a four-year-old what his home is like, he might tell you what color it is, how many rooms it has, and who lives there. If you had asked four-year-old Ethan what home was like, he probably would have stared at you. When Ethan was four, home was a shelter. More importantly in this case, he is on the autism spectrum and didn't communicate with words.

When Ethan's family first met with their case manager at St. Stephen's Human Services, his mom, Kayla, said she wasn't sure if this would work. She was cautiously optimistic that with the right support she could end her family's homelessness for good, but Ethan's needs had complicated her housing search in the past. Kayla had learned it was easiest to call potential landlords while Ethan was asleep because he was less likely to need her or get upset, drowning out the landlord's voice. It was important to Kayla that Ethan was comfortable wherever they moved, but things like creaky floor boards, the faint buzz of lights, and unfamiliar neighbors frequently upset him.

At one apartment showing, Kayla was waiting for Ethan to show his telltale signs that he didn't feel safe there, but the signs never came. Instead, he ran through each room with a smile on his face. Kayla knew that this was home.

Two weeks after moving into this apartment, four-year-old Ethan said his first words. Within one month he had shed his sippy cup, no longer needed overnight pull-up diapers, and was engaging in conversation like he had been talking for years.

Kayla could hardly believe the behavioral changes she'd seen in Ethan. Still, things were tough. Her



job wasn't paying a living wage, and the stress of it was doing a number on her health. She considered moving to a smaller home, risking losing all the progress that Ethan had made since moving in. When Kayla explained this to her employer and landlord, each gave her the flexibility she needed to stay put. Neither person wanted to lose Kayla and her family. She had proven herself as an employee and tenant and had earned their trust.

Today, Ethan is five, and he would love to tell you all about his home.

About St. Stephen's Human Services

The mission of St. Stephen's Human Services is ending homelessness. We progress toward this goal through Street Outreach, shelter, and housing programs for individuals and families. We envision a community in which housing instability is rare, brief and non-recurring, ending homelessness as we know it.

Street Outreach

St. Stephen's Street Outreach team works with people sleeping outside or in places unfit for human habitation. The team provides on-the-spot services to ensure safety and survival for people experiencing unsheltered homelessness, while helping clients address their barriers to housing.

Shelter

St. Stephen's provides emergency shelter to up to 94 individuals experiencing homelessness each night. In addition to providing meals, access to showers, and a safe place to sleep, staff at our two shelter locations provide coordination of services to assist guests in meeting their long-term goals.

Housing

Our housing programs provide access to scattered-site, affordable housing for single adults and families experiencing and emerging from homelessness. Staff provide support in locating, accessing, and maintaining housing as our clients work toward personal goals and self-sufficiency.

Prevention

In 2019, St. Stephen's expanded its prevention programming with a specific initiative to prevent families with recent histories of shelter stays from returning. This data-driven initiative joins our existing Traditional and Targeted Prevention Programs in helping families remain stably housed.

Become a St. Stephen's Sustainer by setting up your monthly gift at ststephensmpls.org/donate



Message from the Executive Director

Homelessness continues to challenge our community. Recent research from the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation reveals that homelessness has risen 11% over the last three years in Hennepin County, with at least 4,072 people living without a place to call home on October 25, 2018.

While disheartening, these numbers weren't all that surprising. We've felt the need for services increase and the Franklin/Hiawatha Encampment last year was an urgent reminder that homelessness, especially in communities of color and in the Native American community, demands all of us to respond.

St. Stephen's will continue to end homelessness for individuals and families on a daily basis. We will continue to bring a voice to discussions that shape policy and advocate for change on a systems level. We will be a resource for people living outside or precariously housed; our two emergency shelters will provide a safe place where people can work toward housing goals; and our housing programs will offer support individuals and families as they find and maintain housing.

Despite the obstacles, we know that ending homelessness is possible. At St. Stephen's we will keep working hard every day for families like Ethan and Kayla's. Support from the community makes such a difference – it takes all of us.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Scott Redd'.

Scott Redd, Executive Director

Expanded Shelter Services Making a Difference

Shelters are often the first place people experiencing homelessness can work toward long term stability. They are a critical resource in the Twin Cities community as we work to end homelessness.

Since 1981, St. Stephen's Shelter at Clinton Avenue has been providing shelter for men experiencing homelessness. Responding to the changing landscape of shelter needs and high demand, St. Stephen's began partnering with First Covenant Church and Hennepin County in November 2017 to provide year-round, emergency overnight shelter located in the basement of First Covenant Church in downtown Minneapolis. St. Stephen's Shelter at First Covenant Church serves up to 58 adults per night, including both men and women over the age of 18, and is unique by providing the only shelter space in Hennepin County where couples can stay together.

Both shelters provide a safe place to sleep, a warm meal, and showers. But, in addition, are committed to providing a service-rich environment so shelter staff can establish relationships with guests, build trust, and work on the barriers that have prevented long term stability. Each year, these two shelters serve more than 1,300 individuals in our community.

Because **JEREMY AND JANICE** were able to stay in a shelter together, Jeremy can attend to Janice's needs and assist her with tasks she would not be able to do while staying on her own at another shelter, such as bathing and dressing herself.

SHAWNA was able to find relief from her PTSD symptoms and get some much-needed rest because her partner was by her side.

Because of the relationship that was fostered over several months, our team was able to assist **DAVID** during his mental health crisis, and advocate for his referral to a crisis residence.

Thanks to the onsite health care coordination with Healthcare for the Homeless, **DEENA** was able to keep up with her mental health treatment plan.

With help from her shelter advocate, **FATIMAH** was able to access a chemical health assessment onsite and was able to quickly move into treatment and from there, directly into housing.

Please remember
**St. Stephen's
Human Services**
in your will or
estate plan.

Thank You 

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Your donations over the winter months and during severe cold weather snaps were incredibly helpful to the people we serve — thank you! With warmer weather upon us, here are some of the most urgent needs. All items should be new, unless otherwise noted:

- 2-4 Person Tents
- Rain ponchos
- Backpacks
- Underwear (all genders, adult sizes)
- Dental Floss
- Bottles of Water
- Band-Aids
- Travel Tissues
- Travel Wipes
- Toe Nail Clippers
- Washcloths
- Towels (new or gently used)
- Feminine Hygiene Items
- White Undershirts
- Laundry Detergent
- Toilet Paper
- Diapers and Wipes (all sizes)
- Small Flat-Screen TV's (new or gently used)
- Bus Tokens, Gift Cards for Gas or Groceries
- Travel and Full-sized Hygiene: Shampoo, Deodorant, Bug Spray, Sunscreen, Lotion, Lip Balm, Razors

SPRING & SUMMER WISH LIST

Find our drop-off hours and more at ststephensmpls.org/donate