

openhouse

a news update from st. stephen's human services FALL 2013

COMMON GROUND

It is with great honor that I join St. Stephen's and its family of supporters and friends. I have followed St. Stephen's for many years and I look forward to continuing the work the organization has done in our community.

I bring to St. Stephen's nearly two decades of experience working in nonprofits and a deeply held passion for reaching out to those in need. I have worked in urban communities

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Roy Richardson



Jennifer and son

Committed to Change

Back in 2006 I was in a domestic abuse relationship, using drugs, and drinking. I wanted to go to a domestic abuse shelter with my son, but his dad wouldn't let me take him. Instead, I decided to go to a bridge and have my sister call the police to tell them I was going to jump. I wasn't actually going to do it; I just didn't know how else to get out of the relationship.

The police came, took me to the hospital and his dad to jail. I was just happy I didn't have to deal with him anymore.

Growing up, my mom and aunties sold drugs and it became a learned behavior. My childhood wasn't really a childhood. I always was worrying about when the next party would be or if I would be the next girl molested. I ran away at age 14.

My auntie had stayed at Kateri in the 1980s and they helped her a lot so I decided to try it. After awhile I got my own place, but soon I returned to that fast lifestyle of buying and selling drugs and I spent time in jail.

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St. Stephen's Human Services

Housing

Housing opportunities for individual adults and families, including Kateri Residence for Native American women, our Rapid Re-Housing partnership helping families and singles move quickly out of shelters, supportive housing in our Long-Term Homeless and Family Supportive Housing programs, and Homeless Prevention for people in danger of losing their housing.

Employment

Employment support for single adults staying in south Minneapolis shelters as well as families leaving the Minnesota Family Investment Program.

Community Engagement

Educational and advocacy opportunities for housed and not-yet-housed people to promote a greater understanding of homelessness, including through our zAmya Theater Project, A Day in the Life Program, and Homeless Against Homelessness.

Shelter, Street Outreach & Emergency Services

Shelter and advocacy for adult men in our Shelter. For people living without shelter, and the community members concerned for them, we provide on-the-spot outreach and resources, including The Handbook of the Streets, help obtaining birth certificates, and representative payee service.

For questions about this newsletter or St. Stephen's Human Services, please contact:

Margaret Miles
Director of Development
612-870-2276
mmiles@ststephensmpls.org

St. Stephen's never sells or shares the contact information of its supporters.



A Steadfast Friend

Jean Anderson's volunteerism is linked to the history of St. Stephen's Shelter. She was an early volunteer, back in the 1980s when St. Stephen's opened the shelter under the assumption that shelter might be needed temporarily until the economy improved.

Jean recounts a few changes since the 80's when the shelter served men, women, and children. "There were no showers then," she remembers. There was no den where today clients enjoy visiting, watching TV, and playing chess. Jean appreciates that what has remained the same is the passion that drives the work of helping people in housing crises.

Jean recognizes how fragile housing situations can be. A short financial set-back or an illness - especially mental illness - can tear a family apart. She reflects on the families she knows that have made it through such struggles that could have left them homeless. These experiences were what inspired her to reach out to others. "We all need to do what we can. Sometimes all you've got to give is a smile."

Shelter staff and clients alike count on Jean's homey touch in the shelter. She enjoys creating a welcoming environment by providing seasonal decorations for the holidays or the birds and flowers that adorn tables for the summer.

St. Stephen's Shelter relies on volunteers to sleep overnight, be available for shelter guests' needs, and to wake them in the morning. Each year our overnight volunteers save the organization tens of



Jean Anderson

thousands of dollars in staff time. In addition to helping with overnights and providing hospitality to guests, Jean donates household items to the agency on a regular basis. "I visit a lot of garage sales to pick up things the shelter guests can use when they move out of the shelter." In the winter, garage sales are scarce, but that doesn't stop Jean. "That's when I usually hit Savers, especially on 'senior days' so I can get the 40 percent discount." Buy-one-get-one sales are another great opportunity, Jean says, for people to stock up on what they need and donate the rest to the Shelter.

St. Stephen's is grateful to Jean and all of our volunteers for the kindness and generosity that eases difficult times in peoples' lives.

If you are interested in volunteering, please call Michelle Perrin at 612-879-7627.

"Common Ground" continued from page 1

and programs for most of my career. I have not been on the front lines working with clients for several years, but when I was, it was always important to me to learn from each encounter I had. Everyone has a journey. Everyone has a story. Respecting where each person has been and the obstacles they face is sometimes the one thing that encourages them to move forward.

Doing this work has shown me that one of the best ways to connect with people is to meet them on common ground. For this reason I've volunteered with at-risk young men by

playing basketball and other sports with them at the Salvation Army as an opportunity to mentor them on common ground.

St. Stephen's Human Services is "common ground" for so many people. As you well know, this is a place where all political viewpoints and faith beliefs can come to work together on a shared effort. Ending homelessness is important to the dignity of every person in our community. Each of us has a role to play and I am honored to serve as your partner in my new role at St. Stephen's.

"Jennifer" continued from page 1

I've been in and out of Kateri a few times, but am really committed now. It can be hard living with so many other women, but you get used to it. Being sober is bumpy. I've been sober for six months, but I don't have energy and my depression is returning. I'm focusing on passing the six-month mark because it gets a little easier after that. Other than staying sober, I'm working through anger issues and trying to be more accepting. I've also been helping out with the kids at Kateri – I just love them.

GIVE TO THE MAX DAY IS THURSDAY NOVEMBER 14!



All new donors will be matched by the Frey Foundation, so please tell your friends and family to participate in the Great Minnesota Give Together!

Want a reminder the day before? Email abrandt@ststephensmpls.org

Thank you!

HOUSING AS

INTRO

It seems like a no-brainer, right? Housing and poor healthcare are critically intertwined. Put 45 people in a room to sleep in close proximity and see if they don't all catch the same flu. Ask a woman recovering from surgery to get plenty of rest—except that the shelter closes during the day and she needs to find somewhere else to be. Ask a fellow sleeping outside to arrange for and get to a doctor's appointment and see how well he can manage it.

Living outside or in homeless shelters exacerbates existing health problems and causes new ones. Chronic diseases, such as hypertension or mental health problems, are challenging to manage. Acute problems such as infections or injuries are difficult to heal when there is no place to recuperate. The crowded conditions of shelters and other services spread communicable

disease. Medications are easily lost or compromised by the inability to keep them refrigerated.

On the other hand, when people have stable housing, they are healthier because they are getting a good night's sleep, feeling stress levels ease, and being able to make doctor appointments because they have a phone and keep them because they have an alarm clock.

St. Stephen's works with people in a variety of ways to obtain housing and, further, to maintain their health so that illness does not become a cause for losing their home.

KATERI RESIDENCE

St. Stephen's Kateri Residence works with homeless Native American women in recovery from chemical dependence. Kateri's staff includes an RN who is available to residents and graduates of the program. Kate

Bendel, Kateri Program Manager says, "The community we serve here has significant health needs: chemical abuse, of course, but also fetal alcohol effect, cirrhosis, diabetes, asthma and ADHD in children. Some women come to us pregnant." Every woman entering the program (and each child, if they have children) is given a health assessment. "It is very



Area podiatrists volunteer to do foot wellness checks for hundreds of people.

comprehensive," says Kateri RN, Cheree O'Shields. "It includes health status, medications they may be taking, and an assessment of their psychological/emotional health because so many have experienced trauma." A plan is created to ensure the women make and keep medical appointments, take medications, get exercise, attend support groups or classes, and more. "Sometimes it's important to make small but significant changes." Cheree says. "For example, the women would always have ice cream on their shopping list. We purchased a couple of blenders and taught a class on making healthy smoothies and they have completely embraced it. It's so much healthier and the children love it as a treat."

MEDICA PILOT

St. Stephen's Ending Long-term Homelessness Program works with people who have been homeless for



A partnership between Medica and our Street Outreach Program will demonstrate how stable housing brings down healthcare costs.

HEALTHCARE

long periods of time. In a study done with participants who were chronic inebriates, we found that 56% of housed participants accessed healthcare within a month of securing housing, compared with 29% prior to housing.

A new pilot program funded by the Medica Foundation will provide even greater details about the impact of housing on healthcare. With direction from Medica Behavioral Health, St. Stephen's Street Outreach Team identifies people living outside who are Medica members and who have significant histories of using emergency rooms as healthcare. St. Stephen's then connects these folks to housing as well as to the folks at Medica Behavioral Health Services. Data will be evaluated and is expected to show significant health improvements as well as cost-savings in this housing plus healthcare model. A program participant wrote a note to us,

"Between two surgeries and numerous doctor appointments, going to a place I



Kateri Residence participates in the American Indian Wellness Fair.

can call home has been a blessing and a comfort. Going from homelessness to home, from no insurance to great medical care, and from such insecurity to faith and trust in people I've met—today is so much better than eight months ago. And having had a second interview for potential employment absolutely confirms how well this program can and does work. Thank you!"

VITAL PARTNERSHIPS

There are many other ways that St. Stephen's provides healthcare for people in our programs. One night each week medical professionals from Healthcare for the Homeless provide a variety of healthcare to guests staying in our shelter.

Weekly groups, open to all families and individuals in our housing programs, offer classes on nutrition, support for sobriety, and art therapy.

Each year a small army of orthopedists kicks off the winter by giving hundreds of foot health evaluations, paired with free new socks and new shoes donated by Red Wing Shoes.

Program participants are given help with transportation to see mental health professionals, dentists who provide pro bono care, and much more.

In the 2012 Wilder Survey on Homelessness in Minnesota, 51% of people reported chronic physical health conditions, and 55% reported serious mental health concerns. Without access to healthcare, people tend to allow conditions to persist until they land in emergency rooms, or in the saddest cases, die from preventable causes.

Housing and healthcare go together. They are costly, but it saves both money and lives to ensure that all citizens live in conditions that promote good health.



A nurse provides healthcare in St. Stephen's Shelter.

THIS SUMMER AT ST. STEPHEN'S...



Father Mike Tegeder, Pastor of the Church of Gichitwaa Kateri, presided over a smudging ceremony at this summer's Kateri Residence Open House.



St. Stephen's annual Italian Dinner fundraiser welcomed dozens of people to a meal prepared and served by program participants and staff.



Folks at the Medica Behavioral Health/Optum office in Bloomington did a drive and donated a vanload of bedding, socks, and other needed items!



Youth from St. Wenceslaus Church in New Prague volunteered to do a block clean-up for us!



Role-playing was used in the St. Stephen's training for volunteers who wanted a broader understanding of homelessness.



zAmya Theater presented "There's No Place Like Home" (a story of homelessness based on "The Wizard of Oz") at this year's Fringe Festival!

LEARN WITH US!



The St. Stephen's learning program, **A Day in the Life**, is a unique opportunity to engage with and be educated by people who have experienced homelessness. The day includes walking to shelters, drop-ins and other services and meeting with individuals who have experienced homelessness to hear their stories.

Thursday October 10th 9am to 3:30pm

\$60 per person (lunch included)

To sign up or for questions, contact Cathy Heying at cheying@ststephensmpls.org or 612-760-5125.

A Day in the Life is also available to large groups and scheduled at your convenience.



5k run/walk

Saturday, October 12

at Theodore Wirth Park,

9:00am – 12:00pm

Registration and more information:

healthyandhoused.eventbrite.com/

The first-ever **Healthy & Housed: Race for the Key** will benefit four Minneapolis emergency homeless shelters: St. Stephen's Human Services, Simpson Housing Services, Salvation Army Harbor Light Center,

WISH LIST

WE ARE IN NEED OF:

- radios
- tvs (not too large, please)
- tv converter boxes
- dishes, glasses, silverware, cookware
- microwaves (working please!)
- bedding, towels, pillows & shower curtains
- toilet paper and hygiene items
- cleaning supplies

IN-KIND NEEDS

Accepted Tues & Thurs 8:30-11:30 and Wed 11:30-1:30

Please drop off at our new location:

2309 Nicollet Avenue Minneapolis 55404.

Small loads can be brought to the front door.

If you have more than one bag/box, please bring to rear of building and ring intercom.

For more information call Andria at 612-870-2292.

ending homelessness

st.stephen's HUMAN SERVICES

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**Thank you from the Staff of
St. Stephen's Human Services!**