

Letter from the Executive Director House of Charity - A Continuum of Care



What is a continuum of care? House of Charity's continuum of care is a plan to organize and deliver comprehensive services and housing to meet the specific needs of people who are experiencing homelessness as they move toward stable housing and maximize self-sufficiency. It includes action steps to end homelessness and prevent a return to homelessness. Prevention of housing loss is the most important part.

So how does House of Charity prevent eviction or housing loss? Many people who eat the daily, free public meals we serve at our Food Centre are employed, but do not earn enough to cover their total cost of living. By eating one or more meals with us, they can stretch their incomes. One of our guests, Julia, was very direct in sharing her story with us: "I can eat here and that allows me to save money for rent." Several clients who participate in our Day by Day outpatient chemical dependency and mental health treatment program live on their own. The support and services they receive enable them to continue living independently.

Once housing is lost, then what? House of Charity provides two types of housing, both with support services: **transitional and permanent supportive housing.** We house 113 men and women who have experienced long-term homelessness in transitional housing. Eight of our beds are set aside for homeless veterans through a partnership with the VA. While there is no time-limit as to how long clients can stay, the goal is for them to transition on to permanent housing. At any one time, about 25 to 30% of our clients utilize our Day by Day treatment program to address some of the underlying causes of their homelessness, including

mental illness and/or chemical dependency. Our case managers work with clients to identify their goals and provide or connect them with the services and supports they need to move forward. For example, case managers help clients: address pressing health issues and obtain preventive care; seek benefits as appropriate; request credit, rental and criminal background reports and correct any discrepancies; and find permanent housing. Case managers also refer clients to ESL, GED and other education programs, job training, and employment placement.

The ultimate goal of all work toward ending homelessness is permanent housing, affordable to those of all income levels. Through our partnership with Hennepin County's Housing First Program, we have placed 111 transitional housing clients farther along the housing continuum, into their own apartments in the community. We provide ongoing case management to each of them as they continue making strides toward self-sufficiency.

House of Charity's integration of services, internal and external, is a major part of our continuum of care strategy to end homelessness and to meet the individual needs of our clients. This issue of our newsletter highlights one client's journey along the continuum, including his stay in our transitional housing, participation in the Day by Day program, and placement in the community through Housing First. The true continuum of care required to end homelessness, poverty and hunger in our community involves all of us - caring about the issues and contributing to their resolution:

All people are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be, and you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be.

-Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

House of Charity
the heart of the city

Beats
from the heart of the city



Spring 2012

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Words of Wisdom

"I can't change the direction of the wind, but I can adjust my sails to always reach my destination."

-Maryanne Radmacher-Hershey

Recovery Leads to Reunion

Lon's Story

*"No one has ever helped me like this before...
No one has ever helped me like the people at House of Charity."*

House of Charity's mission statement is: *Feed those in need, house those experiencing homelessness, and empower individuals to achieve independence.* Staff, volunteers, and donors play an important role in helping us carry out our mission on a daily basis. The following story illustrates how the work we do has a meaningful and lasting impact on the people we serve.

Let's start at the end:



Lon is living in his own apartment. He has been awarded custody of his 15-month-old son. He has been reconciled with his mother. He has plans to go back to school.

Lon's struggles with drugs and alcohol led him to prison. His two sons were taken from their mothers and placed in foster care while he was incarcerated. Lon and his mother stopped speaking because she was upset with his drug use and behavior.

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Two Minutes With...

Maren Johnson, Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor (LADC)

Maren joined House of Charity's Day by Day program in March 2010, after earning her LADC at Minneapolis Community and Technical College (MCTC).

A typical day for Maren starts at 7:30 am when she arrives in the office, fields questions from clients, and prepares for her group session. Maren and her twelve clients gather in group from 8:00 to 11:00 am. Maren will present and facilitate discussion around topics such as *how chemical dependency affects relationships and relapse prevention - different ways of getting support to stay sober.* After lunch, Maren will meet individually with clients. She also advocates for them; she may accompany clients on parental visits or to a doctor's appointment. Group therapy is Maren's favorite activity because she finds the clients have good insights and she always learns from them. They also laugh - a lot! While they find humor in difficult subjects, such as their past behavior, they also look for the lessons. Gratitude was the subject of one recent session.

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Thank You!

We are pleased to announce that the following foundations made gifts to House of Charity in the first quarter of 2012.

Otto Bremer Foundation
WCA Foundation
Turner Family Foundation
G&K Services Foundation
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

We are grateful because funding for our free public meals and in-house case management staff relies solely on grants and donations.



House of Charity
the heart of the city

510 South Eighth Street
Minneapolis, MN 55404

Phone: 612.594.2000

Executive Director: Bert Winkel

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Upcoming Events

Heart of the City Open House

Hear from our Executive Director and program staff about the state of House of Charity today and our plans for the future.

**May 15th
11 AM -12 Noon**

You are also welcome to join us for lunch at the Food Centre following the event.

**RSVP to Melissa at
612-594-2003 or
m.musliner@
houseofcharity.org**



Lon's Story (continued)

When Lon was released from prison, he first went to another treatment program and then came to House of Charity. He lived in our transitional housing and participated in our Day by Day treatment program. He went to group sessions every day and established a particularly trusting relationship with his counselor, Maren. Maren was very supportive and worked with Lon's parole officer as well as the child protection workers.

Lon graduated from the Day by Day program after 90 days. Through House of Charity's Housing First program, Lon was able to move into his apartment. He is still going to support groups and meeting up with friends from House of Charity. He is now off parole. Lon appreciated his stay at House of Charity; he felt he had the support of all the counselors and his case manager. Lon's oldest son (15) is now living with his mother in Wisconsin and Lon sees him regularly. Lon's youngest son came to live with him in December. Lon's mother will help Lon with child care when he goes back to school to learn small engine repair.

Lon says that if it weren't for House of Charity, his sons still would be in foster care and he probably would be on the street.

We are grateful to you and everyone who is interested in and supports our work with Lon and others in need.

You have a large impact on our ability to *feed, house, and empower.*

Cultivating Community Housing First Landlords



We would like to take a minute to express our gratitude for the amazing landlords and management companies that have welcomed our Housing First program clients as tenants. We are

grateful that they work with us to provide permanent supportive housing for those in need in our community. We are happy to report that these landlords are as pleased with us and our clients as we are with them. Here's what they had to say:

"The fact that your clients have training (e.g., *how to be a good tenant; living on a Housing First Budget*) allows them to succeed at being good residents and helps them be successful in their lives."

"Having a case manager visit their clients on a consistent basis is critical for the program to succeed with a landlord."

"Everything is spectacular with my residents from House of Charity."

"Out of all the programs I have worked with over the years, House of Charity is the best."

"I encourage many other property managers and management companies to work with you."

Two Minutes With...



Maren strongly feels that her clients have the strengths and resources within themselves to overcome their addictions and change their lives. She encourages them to tap into those resources and supports them when they make good choices. In her words, "I help them to see that they have reasons to stay sober - the things that are going well in their lives." Maren believes that just a minor shift in thinking can bring about a major shift in changing the course of someone's life. As an example, Maren talked about one client who ultimately realized that he did not have to respond to every provocation - he recognized that he had the option to just walk away. Because of this small shift in thinking, he avoided predictable consequences, such as physical fighting and the loss of his housing and other supports. This small shift allowed him to remain on the path toward recovery and independence. Maren is currently working toward a degree in health fitness. She wants to share the benefits of healthy living with her clients.

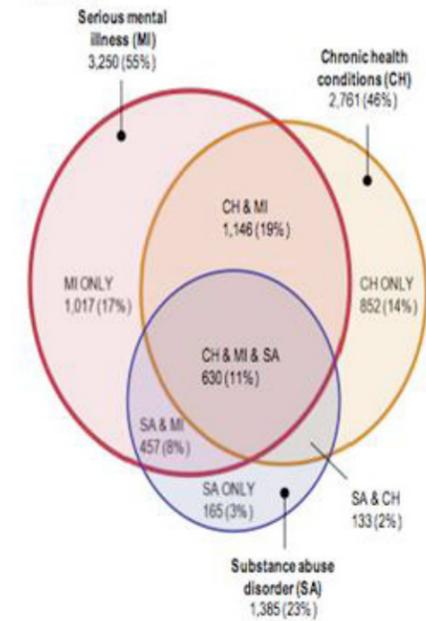
By the Numbers

According to the latest survey of Minnesota's homeless conducted by Wilder Research, **55%** of homeless adults have a serious mental illness and **23%** have a substance abuse disorder.

INCIDENCE AND CO-OCCURRENCE OF HEALTH ISSUES AMONG HOMELESS ADULTS (2009)

Homeless adults:
5,957 (100%)

Proportion with none of these three disabilities:
1,557 (26%)



Individuals who experience the most difficulty with employment and housing instability are those who have both disorders - 8% of Minnesota's homeless population.

Last year, House of Charity's Day by Day program became licensed by the State to treat individuals with co-occurring chemical dependency and mental health issues. This change was prompted by counselors who would see time and again how a client's progress in overcoming addiction would be hindered by ongoing, untreated mental health issues.

We currently serve 42 clients.

Source: *Homelessness in Minnesota*; Wilder Research, May 2010.

At the Capitol



House of Charity staff have their ears to the ground when it comes to legislation that affects people we serve. With election season, bonding issues, and changes in health care on the table, we have been much more present at the Capitol than in years past.

Here are some examples of what we've been up to:

Staff and clients joined the Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless for "Homeless Day on the Hill" and Minnesota Recovery Connection for "Recovery Day on the Hill."

Our Housing Director, Marti Maltby, testified in front of the Minnesota House of Representatives Health and Human Services Reform Committee regarding Group Residential Housing (GRH). He described how the State, service agencies, and clients can best work together to meet the financial obligations of housing.



Chef's Corner

Apricot Chicken Pot Stickers

30 wonton skins

Saute and drain:

8 oz cooked & diced chicken

1 medium finely diced onion

4 diced green onions

2 C shredded cabbage

Mix with:

1/2 C apricot preserves

1 T ginger

1 t black pepper

1 T chili garlic sauce

2 T soy sauce

Place 1 teaspoon of the mixture in the center of each wonton; fold and spray with a non-fat cooking spray.

Cook at 325 until golden.

Serve with a dipping sauce:

1/2 C soy, 2 T water, 1 t sugar, 1 t fresh ground garlic

Yields 30 pot stickers

Tip:
To relieve kitchen burns, place raw onion directly on burn. The specific acidity in onions counters heat and soothes skin naturally!

Make a Difference

Your gift has a profound and immediate impact.

\$20 provides an hour of case management and just 50 cents provides a meal.

Enclosed is my gift of:

\$_____ to help feed, house, and empower as many people as possible.

Please make checks payable to House of Charity. Feel free to use the envelope provided. To make a credit card donation, please visit: www.houseofcharity.org

Consider leaving a gift to House of Charity in your will. Contact us for more information.

Send us your Feedback on the newsletter!

NAME: _____

EMAIL: _____

COMMENTS: _____

Check here if you would like to receive additional newsletters sent by email twice per year.

Did you know?

January 2012 marked the beginning of our Women's Day by Day treatment program!