Spring 2013

Denise’s Story

Denise found herself homeless in 2006 when she was evicted for not paying the rent - she had used her money for drugs and alcohol, instead. Over the course of the next six years, Denise struggled. She lived in friends’ homes, emergency shelters, treatment centers, and sober housing. Unfortunately, she did not maintain her sobriety and was taken to detox on more than one occasion. Again, she lost her housing.

Denise went to the Salvation Army, determined to get back on her feet. She got a full-time job as a telesales. Every day she would bring all of her belongings to work in bags and stick them under her desk. So as not to appear homeless, she pretended that she was planning to work out in the evenings and had brought her gear. She would go back to the Salvation Army night after night. This daily routine became stressful and Denise began drinking again.

Denise came to House of Charity on November 1, 2012. She is moving into her own apartment at the end of March through our Housing First program. Denise credits her case manager for helping her find housing. She feared that her past would prevent anyone from renting to her. In 2001, Denise was charged with a felony for driving under the influence, and was sentenced to house arrest and work release. Although the felony was reduced to a misdemeanor three years later, Denise was afraid that landlords would not accept her once they did a background check. Denise’s case manager, Erin, made her feel that her obstacles were not insurmountable. Denise was upfront with the landlords about what they would find in her background report and explained the circumstances. Denise believes Erin did an amazing job as her case manager, but she stresses that you have to be proactive as a client, as well.

Denise completed treatment through House of Charity’s Day by Day program. She trusted her counselor, Sarah, and found her very caring. She provided the guidance Denise needed. Now, Denise feels that she has put together a strong support system and a solid plan to help keep herself from relapsing.

Denise’s Story

Two Minutes With…

Lia Palmquist, Case Manager & Wellness Coordinator

Lia has been a case manager at House of Charity for over two years and has been working in the social services field her entire career. She holds a BA in Sociology of Law, Criminality & Deviance from the University of Minnesota, and initially had wanted to work on rehabilitation with prison inmates. Lia got involved in working with individuals experiencing homelessness and mental illness during her volunteer work at People Serving People and her job as Activities Director for adults living with Severe and Persistent Mental Illness (SPMI).

Lia has always focused on health and wellness in her own life. For her, wellness is not just about the food we eat or being physically fit. Lia defines wellness as having a good quality of life— one that balances all aspects. She feels that wellness can be different for everyone, but that every person has the ability to achieve wellness. Lia consistently encourages her clients to pursue wellness by challenging them to learn new skills or participate in different activities.

Lia had been advocating to add a wellness component to House of Charity programs. A grant from Medica Foundation enabled us to hire an additional case manager to assume half of Lia’s case load, giving her the time to create the Program. Lia still acts as case manager for about half of the clients she had before the Program took off in January (including all 10 of our Veteran residents, as Lia is also our VA liaison), but is able to offer the Health & Wellness Program to all clients here at House of Charity.

Letter from the Executive Director

Introducing the 2013-2015 Strategic Plan

This year, House of Charity is simultaneously celebrating its long history while planning for the future of our organization, our community and the people we serve. Over the past sixty years, we have learned that homelessness is a complex issue. House of Charity has effectively developed and implemented client-centered programs to support and empower homeless and low-income individuals. These programs include:

• Services – create a comprehensive and holistic continuum of services to meet evolving needs, ultimately leading to greater client stability.

• Growth and Expansion – increase capacity and capability using relevant, evidence-based quality services to meet client demand.

• Leadership – inspire an organizational culture of excellence through innovation, imagination, creativity and values.

• Marketing – generate awareness and deepen existing relationships to increase philanthropic support.

Thank you for partnering with us as we launch into our seventh decade of feeding those in need, housing those experiencing homelessness, and empowering individuals to achieve independence.

Bert Winkel, Executive Director
## Medical Foundation Grant Supports Case Management for our Residents

Since our beginnings on Nicollet Island in 1952, House of Charity has shifted from simply meeting basic needs by providing food and shelter, to addressing the root causes of an individual’s long-term instability, such as chemical dependency, mental illness and lack of life skills, education and employment.

In the past three years, we have added case management for all 116 of our transitional housing residents and a co-occurring mental health and chemical dependency program (Day by Day). Typically, one-fourth of our clients participate in Day by Day. We have 10 beds set aside for Veterans through a contract with the VA and 16 beds for women. Currently, 172 men and 79 women are on our waiting list – enough to fill House of Charity two times over!

We previously took clients from the waiting list on a first come, first served basis. However, that realized some of our clients did not need the significant level of care we offer and could benefit just as well staying at a regular “board and lodging” facility that provided stable housing. To assure that we direct scarce resources to those who can benefit most from them, we started admitting clients based on the DESC Vulnerability Assessment Tool for Determining Eligibility and Allocating Services and Housing for Homeless Adults. The assessment tool measures 10 domains: survival skills, indicated mortality risks, organization/orientation, substance use, social behaviors, basic needs, medical risks, mental health, communications and homelessness. Every potential client is assessed by the tool and service plans for those admitted reflect their identified needs.

Using our targeted admissions process has increased the number of vulnerable, at-risk clients we serve. We approached Medica Foundation to help us fund an additional case manager so that we could reduce case loads and increase the amount of time case managers devote to meeting with clients, monitoring and finding resources for clients. Long term, case managers work with our clients to move them along the continuum from homelessness to stability and greater self-sufficiency. In the short term, with given greater one-on-one attention given to clients, case managers are more likely to observe any health or mood changes in their clients, leading to early intervention. In addition, the fourth case manager has given us the opportunity to create a health and wellness program for our clients (see Lia’s story). Since hiring the fourth case manager, our first three case managers have experienced significant drops in their case load numbers – 26 to 13, 30 to 18, and 30 to 24.

The anticipated outcomes of Medical’s support include:

- Moving 36 clients from transitional to permanent supportive housing in 2013.
- Improvement in our clients’ quality of life – quantified using an inventory of 16 self-rated measurements of happiness, administered routinely to clients.
- Decreased substance abuse.

## Two Minutes With... (continued)

Lia has created a variety of program activities in response to results from a client survey, as well as her own assessment of client needs. These activities range from games like cheers and trivia competitions, to classes on continuing education, to reading and discussion groups, to physical activities. Lia also takes clients on outings to see movies, attend therapeutic groups (like coping with grief), and to utilize the facilities at Running Wolf Gym through a new partnership.

Lia has received fantastic feedback from clients and cannot wait for the weather to warm up so she can move some activities outdoors. She is looking forward to growing the program and seeing clients thrive!

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## Chef’s Corner

### Baked Banana Kjøb

Take 3-5 sheets of Phyllo Dough; unroll & cut in half.

With a pastry brush, apply enough melted butter to cover the tops of each sheet of dough.

Stack the 6-10 sheets.

Place 1/2 banana at bottom of sheet stack.

Add 8-10 butterscotch chips.

Lightly coat with caramel sauce.

Roll folding both ends in jelly roll style.

Bake at 350 degrees.

Top with caramel sauce and 2 dollops of vanilla ice cream.

Enjoy your dessert!