



Note from the Executive Director

Hope
Opportunity
Meals
Empowering

Spring is in the air, or at least around the corner. Soon we will be cleaning windows, raking lawns, planting flowers. Spring brings **hope**. Hope for new **opportunities**. Opportunities to invite friends over for a **meal**, perhaps grilling. The conversation and camaraderie will feel **empowering**.

This is what you miss without a home.

Thank you for helping us continue to give homes to those without.

--Bert Winkel, Executive Director

Bert Winkel



What Can You Do??

- 1. Sign up Today!** Support these alliances by going to: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/HomesforAll>
- 2. Contact your State Senator and Representative Today!** Email or phone asking for their support of Homes for All and Prosperity for All. In your email, copy and paste information from the Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless Legislative Agenda on their webpage and ask for their support. Only takes 2 minutes of your time. Need to find your legislator?? Go to: <http://www.gis.leg.mn/OpenLayers/districts/> to find their name and contact information.
- 3. Stay Connected with House of Charity!**



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Spring 2014

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Words of Wisdom

"Be grateful for the home you have, knowing that at this moment, all you have is all you need" -Sarah Ban Breathnach

Moving Forward with Determination and Gratitude

Jennifer's Story

"I wouldn't be here today if it weren't for House of Charity. My family would have buried me two years ago- I would have frozen to death in my car."



Jennifer had been living in her car for two years before finally asking for help from her primary care physician who referred her to House of Charity.

About eight years ago, Jennifer suffered a horrible accident. She was out shopping for last-minute stocking stuffers for Christmas when a drunk driver sped through the Walgreens parking lot striking her as she was walking to her car. She was crushed up against another car. After suffering severe trauma to her body, namely her back, Jennifer was released from the hospital after a few days and returned to work.

Jennifer worked two jobs as a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) at two assisted living facilities for the elderly, a field she loved and had been working in for 18 years. She continued to work her regular schedules at both jobs and ignored the constant pain she continued to experience since the accident.

A few years later, Jennifer slipped and fell on concrete, landing on her back. This new injury compounded with her previous injury that never healed forced Jennifer to have necessary back surgery. Jennifer was now disabled and could not work. With her limited disability income, she lost her home. She moved what furniture she could in to storage and began living in her car.

In the winter of 2012, Jennifer knew she needed help. Jennifer admits to being hesitant at first to ask for help and then even more so when it came time to actually set foot in House of Charity. She drove by and suddenly felt compelled to come in. She said that right off the bat, she was welcomed and treated with compassion and respect from House of Charity staff. There were not any openings for Jennifer right away, but a month later, the Intake Coordinator called her and notified her that there was a place for her if she still needed a place to stay. The next day, Jennifer moved in to House of Charity. She quickly moved from our transitional housing residence to her own apartment in our Housing First program. Jennifer began working with her Case Manager in our Transitional Housing Program and began taking Housing First classes right away. In the five course series, she learned about rental leases and landlord/renter relations, budgeting, how to be a good neighbor, and challenges of living alone. She was determined to get on her feet, get her own place, and start living life again. She appreciated her Case Manager's open door policy and how she went to bat for her when it came time to find Jennifer an apartment. Jennifer was in our Transitional Housing Program for five months before moving on to our Housing First Program.

Jennifer has a great relationship with her Housing First Advocate. They meet weekly and since Jennifer can no longer drive; her Advocate also goes above and beyond by taking her to regular doctor's appointments. Jennifer said that if she didn't have the support of her Advocate along with her housing, she would not have been able to make it. Her Advocate also helps Jennifer deal with her mental health and self-esteem issues; she helps her find resources, with activities of daily living, and with goal-setting. Currently, Jennifer, with the support of her Housing First Advocate, is exploring where to go from here and how to change professions. Jennifer is devastated by the fact that she cannot physically perform the work that she enjoyed doing for so many years as a Certified Nursing Assistant. It has been difficult to figure out employment as Jennifer can neither sit nor stand for long periods of time and has to walk with a cane. Jennifer would like to continue to work in healthcare and is looking in to relative education and training options. She is currently coming up on her one year anniversary of being in her own apartment. Jennifer remains grateful to House of Charity and optimistic for the future. The advice she gives to those in similar situations that she was in is to ask for help and remember that House of Charity doesn't want you to fail.

"It can be so simple," she says, "take the classes that they offer, meet with your Case Manager/ Advocate, do the paperwork, and just follow the rules...you'll be on your feet in no time."

The Big Picture

Lack of Affordable and Permanent Supportive Housing

Where do people like Jennifer go when there isn't housing available??

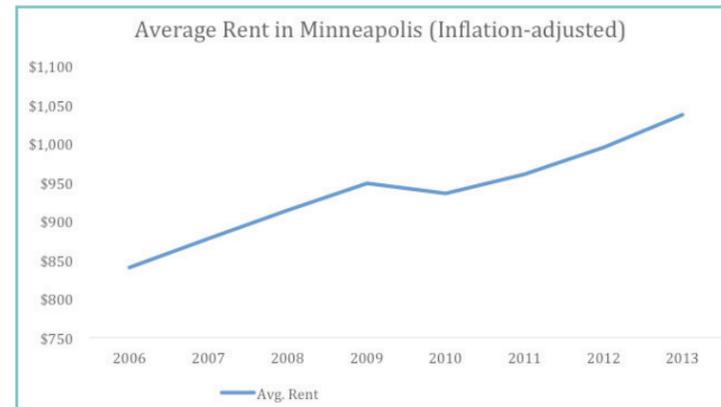
They stay in a holding pattern, on a waiting list, in either a shelter or transitional housing unit. Currently, House of Charity has more than 30 people on a waiting list ready to move into permanent supportive housing through the Housing First Program. The waiting list is capped at 30, but we have many more that are eligible. *Currently, House of Charity is among a dozen of non-profits vying for about 90 available units in Hennepin County.*

In Minneapolis and around the state, there is a shortage of permanent supportive housing options for people ready to make the next step toward self-sufficiency and independence.

A combination of low vacancy rates, low wages, and a lack of funding in Minneapolis has created one of the worst affordable rental shortages in more than a decade for low-income renters. (MinnPost: "Minneapolis renters face huge affordable housing shortage," 01/14/14)

Increased unemployment, stagnated wages, and home foreclosures from the Great Recession added more people to the growing homeless population and added to the waiting lists for permanent supportive and affordable housing, while rental prices increased. (MinnPost: "Minneapolis renters face huge affordable housing shortage," 01/14/14)

In Hennepin County, **for every 100 extremely low-income renters there are 34 units that are affordable and available.** (National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) analysis of CHAS data, 2006-10)



At the Capitol (continued)

2. Preserving and rehabilitating federally assisted affordable housing.

- * Preserving rural units at risk of losing federal subsidy due to disrepair.
- * Rehabilitating aging public housing, operated in over 200 communities across the state.

3. Stabilizing communities impacted by the foreclosure crisis.

- * Rehabilitating deteriorating buildings and foreclosed homes.
- * Increasing rental and homeownership opportunities for low and middle-income Minnesotans.

The return on investment is impressive. *Every public dollar invested in supportive housing returns \$1.44 to taxpayers.*

The Prosperity for All MFIP Workforce Education Bill works for the advancement of public policies that better serve striving families while helping Minnesota's economy and requests the reduction of barriers to Adult Basic Education, higher education, and English Language Learning (ELL). The passage of this bill would accomplish:

- Allowing MFIP participants to earn a GED/diploma as an approved work activity
- Allowing MFIP participants to be enrolled in 4-year, post-secondary education programs
- Giving new graduates the flexibility to job search for 12 weeks rather than 6
- Removing barriers to enrolling in ELL classes for those who are learning English as a second language

The Prosperity for All Bill is good for education, employers and the economy:

Increased education leads to increased earnings – Between 1975 and 2005, wages for those with college and advanced degrees rose by 22% and 29%. Wages for high school graduates stagnated and those without high school degrees fell by 16% (Baum & Ma, "Education Pays: The Benefits of Higher Education for Individuals and Society," 2007)

House of Charity is proud to be among the organizations across Minnesota that have signed on in support of these alliances. Additionally, our staff and clients advocated for these bills with their Senators and Representatives at the State Capitol on March 6th during Homeless Day on the Hill which was organized by Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless.

For more information on these bills, go to: <http://www.mnhomelesscoalition.org/2014-legislative-agenda/>

By the Numbers

Housing First Program Goals for 2014

To serve more people, like Jennifer, House of Charity has the following goals for 2014 to expand permanent supportive housing for single homeless adults:

1. House of Charity will register additional Housing First buildings, resulting in an increase of 10 units to provide permanent housing to clients. Since January 1st, one new building was registered with 7 units for Housing First.
2. House of Charity will have 21 new clients housed through Housing First. So far this year, 7 new clients have their own apartments through Housing First.
3. House of Charity will add 3 new housing agency associations for client placement outside of Housing First. To date, we are partnering with Affirmation House, a sober living residence, and Concordia Arms, a senior residence through CommonBond, as other more permanent housing options for our clients.

Our goal is to continue to develop partnerships and register several buildings so clients do not have to wait for a permanent place to call home.

At the Capitol

In addition to our internal efforts to provide more permanent supportive housing, House of Charity is actively involved in legislative advocacy to address solutions for homelessness. 2014 marks the second session of the Homes for All alliance which works to advance policy initiatives that lead to housing stability in Minnesota. This year, the Prosperity for All alliance was created out of the state's dire need for policy reform of the Minnesota Family Investment Program's (MFIP) participation restrictions. Each alliance has its own legislative agenda and accompanying bill proposal.

Home is the foundation for stable families, strong communities, and a competitive state. **The Homes for All Bill requests \$100 million in bonds for investments in affordable housing.** Statewide funding would be awarded through the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency and used for:

1. Building and rehabilitating supportive housing.

* Creating affordable housing options for extremely low-income Minnesotans including families with children, homeless youth, veterans, seniors, and people with disabilities.

* Leveraging private funding to build supportive housing – a proven strategy to reduce long-term homelessness by combining affordable housing with supportive services. (Like House of Charity)



Your gift has a profound and immediate impact.

\$20 provides one night in a Housing First apartment 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

I am interested in leaving a gift to House of Charity in my will. Please contact me. Phone: _____

My gift is in memory/honor (circle one) of: _____

NAME: _____

EMAIL: _____

Check here if you would like to join our email list!