

This issue focuses on House of Charity's mission to empower individuals to achieve independence by looking at several of our programs and how each uniquely helps our clients.

IN THIS ISSUE

Steve's Story

Executive Director's Note

What Food Assistance Looks Like Now

Pulling Yourself Up By the Bootstraps

Mental Illnesses and Homelessness

Homes for All Legislation

AN ULTIMATE GOAL: INDEPENDENCE

// Steve's Story



“There’s a lot of things that I lost while I was on drugs, and I’ve gained every last one back.”

Almost a decade ago, Steve came to Minnesota from Chicago. Addicted to drugs and with his life falling apart, a friend bought him a bus ticket and told him to get treatment. He took advantage of the generosity and it has only gotten better since then.

Steve recalls getting to Minnesota and the first thing he saw was the Metrodome. He climbed out of the bus, kissed the ground and has been “blessed ever since.”

Shortly after arriving in Minnesota, Steve got a labor job at a local company. He had held similar jobs in Chicago and was shocked when he learned what his pay would be. It was more than he had ever made. After a year stay at Dorothy Day, a friend told him about the programs at House of Charity and he has been a part this organization since.

When Steve walked through the doors of House of Charity, he had a goal: to get clean, to get his own apartment, to achieve the things he had been striving for but didn't have the resources to complete.

From starting in the permanent supportive housing program and seeking help in the Day by Day treatment program to now living his own apartment for a second time with the help of House of Charity, Steve knows that all he has accomplished is because he had goals.

It's the mantra he keeps repeating: “I've got to have goals.”

Without goals, Steve says, not only he, but anyone who walks through the doors of House of Charity, will get stuck. With no vision or support, there is no chance for success and independence.

A NOTE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The newly released 2015 Wilder Research Study on Homelessness statewide in Minnesota

has revealed that mental health issues are still a concern for adults experiencing homelessness: 57% report serious mental health issues in 2015 compared with 55% in 2012 and 36% in 2000. Our newsletter sheds light on how mental illness impacts these people and the return on investment that occurs when we help them address their mental illness.

We hope to broaden your understanding of homelessness by shedding light on some of the challenges that they face in order to perform simple daily rituals like bathing and hygiene when living in the public eye. With your help, we can continue to help individuals like Kyle maintain housing while addressing mental illness and addiction. Through

your partnership, we can also continue to provide a free public shower to help people experiencing homelessness be healthy while offering some privacy.

Thanks to you and your support of the programs of the House of Charity, we are making a difference in the lives of hundreds of individuals in the Minneapolis area.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Your gift has a profound and immediate impact on people like Steve.

Just \$45 provides supportive housing for someone in need.

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 and provide your email above if you would like to receive only our e-correspondence!

// A Clearer View: WHAT FOOD STAMPS LOOK LIKE

For a family of four in Minnesota, the average cost of groceries per month is \$900. For families with little or no stable income, that looks more like an impossible obstacle to overcome. When money is tight, food is often last in a long list of expenses, housing costs often becoming the priority. As a result, many individuals and families come to places like the House of Charity Food Centre to help just a little with their food crisis. Many of these people also have food assistance. The program in Minnesota, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, can help in bridging the gap, but often isn't enough. The program, which used to be known as food stamps, offers about \$200 a month per person. Based on the average cost of groceries for a family of four, as stated above, this is far from sufficient to keep families, especially

children healthy. That's why they end up at the Food Centre. The fact that a family is seeking help with food, whether through the Food Centre or SNAP is no indication of how hard they are working. So many parents work extreme hours just to be able to afford a house. We at House of Charity are here to help them bridge the gap as they work toward complete sufficiency and independence.

PEOPLE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD	MONTHLY GROSS INCOME LIMITS	SNAP BENEFITS EACH MONTH
1	\$1,634	\$194
2	\$2,203	\$357
3	\$2,772	\$511
4	\$3,342	\$649
5	\$3,911	\$771
6	\$4,480	\$925
7	\$5,049	\$1,022
8	\$5,619	\$1,169
FOR EACH ADDITIONAL PERSON OVER 8.	Add \$569	Add \$146

// Steve's Story: *continued from page 2*

Steve's client advocate, Cassandra, has helped Steve look at where he has come from and be able to look ahead, towards complete independence and no addiction.

Since coming to Minnesota, Steve has rebuilt relationships with friends and family, most importantly his daughter. He speaks with pride about her and what she is doing and how much she is like him; her determination and attitude.

He has also become an avid advocate for House of Charity. He repeatedly says that he has nothing bad to say about House of Charity. The organization gave him hope and changed his life. And he wants other people to have that hope as well.

"There's a lot of things that I lost while I was on drugs, and I've gained every last one back because of House of Charity. They gave me my life back."

To Steve, the hallways and rooms of House of Charity feel like a second home. Even though he doesn't live here anymore and has maintained his sobriety, Steve still comes to visit often. This is the place where his life was changed for the better. This is where he was given hope. This is home.

Oftentimes, need, poverty, and hunger look different than we might expect. Steve has worked hard, held a steady job, and still needs the help of House of Charity at times. Join us in helping individuals become stronger and more independent.

FOOD CENTRE: AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THE LIVES OF MANY

In order to learn about our meal guests, we survey the men and women on a quarterly basis. We ask simple questions to gain basic information about their lives, and why they come to the Food Centre. We wanted to share a bit about how frequently our guests utilize the Food Centre.

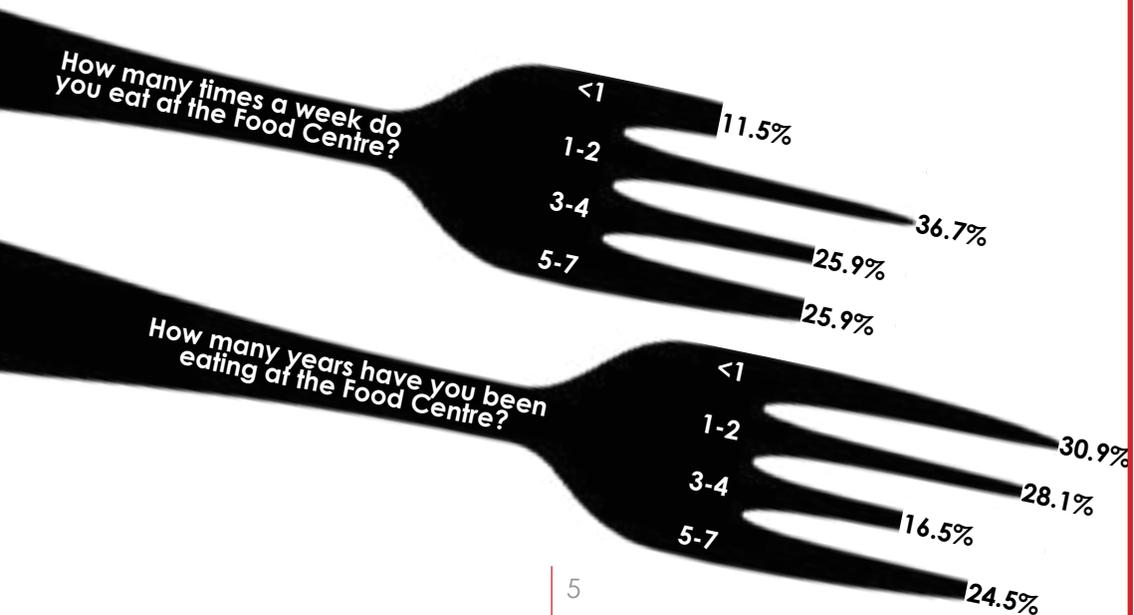
The good news...the Food Centre provides over 125,000 meals to people who are hungry each year. The sad news... 125,000 people per year need a meal for some reason.

Before looking at numbers, let's let Lawrence, a guest who eats with us 6 times per week, frame up the importance of the Food Centre to him. "Ya know, I eat here all the time. Ya'll truly do keep people fed and keep us alive."

You can see that the numbers support Lawrence's statement. The first chart illustrates that over half of our guests depend on the Food Centre for meals at least three times per week. Then, looking closer, we see nearly 90% of our diners eat with us at least once per week on average, in any given month.

In the second graphic, you can see how long people have been utilizing our meal service. With roughly 70% of guests visiting us for at least a year, and almost a quarter of guests coming for more than six years, it is safe to say that the Food Centre plays an essential role in the lives of our guests.

Next newsletter, we will take a look at the data collected about the employment status of Food Centre guests, because quite a few guests are using the facility on their way to, or on their way back from work.



CAN THE POOR REALLY "PULL THEMSELVES UP BY THEIR BOOTSTRAPS"?

"Work harder." "Try harder." "Do better."

These clichéd stigmas follow those in poverty in American culture. The thought is poor people just need to pull themselves out of poverty. But is that possible? Spend just an hour with a homeless veteran; walk in the shoes of a single mother; wait in a day labor line for a morning. You might come to realize that the reality of poverty is very different than something conveniently fixed with a catch phrase.

Many different factors contribute to poverty. Adverse experiences to children, such as abuse, neglect, or parental incarceration place that young life on a difficult path. Adults can also encounter this path of poverty due to lack of opportunity, personal chemical dependency and mental health issues. However, laziness and apathy are rarely the cause of poverty. Carmen Rios, an author and advocate who grew up the child of a single mother struggling with poverty, remembers distinctly the many people who accused her mother of not working hard enough and being the "cause of our faulty economy."

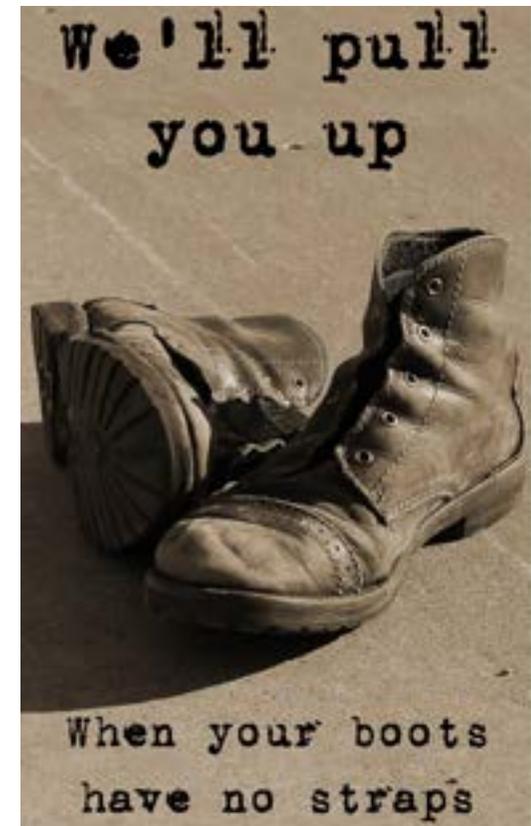
In this land of plenty and equality, often those that need the most are left out. Over half of the children in America live in homes where their parents struggle to make ends meet. A disproportionate number of working adults work two jobs. Many are under or unemployed and struggle with day-to-day costs. Two people of identical age and education may not have the same opportunities for advancement, simply because one lacks the resources to continue education or obtain required skills. Rarely is it a simple case of working harder.

As a culture, we should be helping those who are struggling with poverty. Outside

of limited government support, there are few accessible or relevant resources that allow individuals to climb out of poverty. We must stop perpetuating the myth that a person living in poverty is lazy and the simple solution is to work harder; because that is not always possible.

At House of Charity, we don't expect people experiencing hunger and homelessness to "pull themselves up by their bootstraps." We partner with those individuals and provide them with resources to create their very own bootstraps. And, if needed, we'll pull them up when their boots have no straps.

Carmen Rios, <http://everydayfeminism.com/2015/05/debunking-bootstraps-myth/>
<http://www.beatace.org/aces/>



MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

// Help us fund Homes for All



The 2017 Legislative Session is well underway. House of Charity supports the Homes for All, Prosperity for All, and Restore the Vote legislative agendas.

The Homes for All initiative is pushing for two major initiatives:

- \$100 million investment in bonds for housing - This would allow the state to build or preserve 3,000 homes for Minnesotans experiencing homelessness.
- \$30 million to strengthen Minnesota's Housing Continuum - The Governor's budget and bills in the House and Senate include funds to help individuals and families end their homelessness with services and housing that fits their need.

The Prosperity for All initiative is an appeal for two actions

- Increase the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) cash assistance by \$100. - MFIP provides work support and temporary cash assistance for families working toward full-time employment. The MFIP funds have not increased in 30 years. The cost of living has certainly increased, but the support for families working toward employment has not.
- Improve the Working Family Credit - The credit needs to be offered to more families, be increased, and include younger workers.

Restore the Vote is an effort to reinstate voting rights for ex-offenders on probation or parole.

We need your help! Call or e-mail your Legislator to let them know you want them to support the Homes for All, Prosperity for All, and Restore the Vote Legislative Agendas

It's easy to call and leave a voicemail or message with a staffer: "Hi, my name is _____ and I live in _____(city). I strongly support the \$100 million investment in bonds for housing through the Homes for All initiative. I'm calling to ask _____ to support Homes for All and I want them to also include the MFIP cash assistance increase again in the 2017 budget. It's been 30 years since MFIP cash assistance for low-income families has been increased. It is time to increase support. Thank you."

To find out who represents you go to: <http://www.gis.leg.mn/OpenLayers/districts/>

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