“I don’t like to live in the past because the past can’t do nothing but keep you in the past. I like looking to the future now, because I can see it. At first, I couldn’t see it. I’ve been shot nine times, stabbed, stole from and left for dead because that’s the lifestyle that I lived on the streets. I’m not even supposed to be here today. The world counted me out, but there was a different plan for my life.”

And what a difference that was. From growing up in the toughest parts of town with a father who was a user and dealer and the house he was living in being the neighborhood “party house” to now being clean and sober for five years, Tawann’s life is worlds apart from the one he came from.

Tawann grew up in Indiana and came to Minnesota more than two decades ago. But leaving his hometown didn’t help him escape his past. It found him here too. Tawann said it’s because that sometimes feels like the easiest route, the one that’s most familiar.

When his marriage fell apart, Tawann allowed the rest of his life to do the same. He started using drugs again and he started dealing again too.

At the beginning of 2014, Tawann realized his life had spiraled completely out of control and decided it was time to make a change.

After spending two months at Turning Point, Tawann came to House of Charity. He lived in our residence hall and attended Day by Day treatment with us for about seven months.

The separation from his previous life he was able to achieve here helped Tawann succeed in being sober and clean.

“By me being in the House of Charity program, it helped me to not only just abstain from drugs but it helped me to get my life together because it helped me to get away from my circle of friends that encouraged that lifestyle I was trying to leave. I had to get away from people, places and things and this was like an escape and at the same time I was able to get tools to use in my day to day life from the treatment.”

Five years sober and clean and he’s giving back to the community he “freely helped destroy.” continued on page 4
MAKE A DIFFERENCE

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

Just $50 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!

WE’LL BE BREAKING GROUND SOON!

Our long-awaited housing project is finally rolling!

Construction will begin to build 61 pet-friendly studio apartments for people experiencing long-term homelessness, along with other community spaces to expand and improve our services and the privacy of our clients.

As we get closer to breaking ground in the next few months, we’ve started planning an event to celebrate that.

We’re excited to start this project to better serve our neighbors in need. To keep up-to-date on all things construction related, connect with us on Facebook here: www.facebook.com/HouseOfCharityMN.

// Advocacy: AT THE CAPITOL AND BEYOND

On March 13th, House of Charity staff and clients joined thousands of others in advocating for the homeless at the capitol. We met with legislators, attended hearings and connected with others who care as much for those experiencing homelessness as we do.

The highlights of the legislative agenda created by the Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless are:

• Invest $15 mil. in the Emergency Services Program
• $200/mo. increase for the Minnesota Family Investment Program
• Restore the Vote

While the day on the hill is vitally important, advocacy doesn’t stop when we leave the capitol. That’s why we need you. The dire situations of thousands of Minnesotans are being silenced and it’s our responsibility to raise our voices for them.

Please join us in the important advocacy work. Learn more about where we need you most and what events you can attend:

www.houseofcharity.org/advocate-with-us

// Tawann’s Story: continued from page 2

Tawann is in his own apartment through Housing Supports, our Housing First program and is giving his time through volunteering with Neighborhood for Change, One Family One Community and MAD DADS. Being a part of these organizations and out in the community helps keep him grounded.

“Now I’m out there talking with folks about bettering the community and reaching them because in our community, folks are stuck and we don’t see the way out. We want the easy way out and the easy way out is a trap. I was able to see that there was a bigger and better way through these organizations and they kept me grounded as well.”

Tawann is going back to school this summer. His daughter just bought her first home and he’s about to become a grandpa. Because he saw that it was time to make a change, he turned his life around and now he gets be a part of his family’s lives.

And he’s giving back through MAD DADS. He is changing lives and giving back to the community he hurt with his addiction and dealing.

“What better than to have some guys who have been through this, that have changed their life around that can go out and talk with some other brothers and try to help them change their life around. Even if it’s been two years, you can’t save the world, but you can talk and be present and just uplift people no matter who it is. That’s the best thing they can be given.”

Tawann is changing the world through strengthening his community. What can you do today to do the same?
Mayor Jacob Frey helped served lunch at our Food Centre. Amazing staff and volunteers stepped up during the polar vortex and served 110 meals on that frigid Wednesday. New CEO/Executive Director, Deb Moses, joined us in December. Housing client Tika spoke at the welcome reception for Deb.

Our hungry neighbors in Minneapolis walk through our Food Centre doors every day and expect to get out of the dangerous heat or cold and eat their meal in peace. They don’t expect fights. They don’t expect an intoxicated individual creating a dangerous situation. But sometimes that’s what they get.

We’re changing that.

For a large portion of the homeless population, our most regular Food Centre guests, they found themselves without a home because of domestic violence. For every one of our homeless population, they face abuse and violence from people every day. That should be something they don’t have to worry about with us.

Because of that, we are installing new safety measures in our Food Centre. Security cameras and a card scanner are being installed. Our diners will be given a personalized scan card to swipe as they enter.

Not only will this allow us to deny entry to individuals who have created a dangerous environment, but we’ll better be able to track the demographics of the people who eat with us. This will help us as we seek to improve our services and apply for funding. These changes will also ensure our volunteers are safer.

The safety of every individual who walks through our doors is our priority. While we can not eradicate every instance of violence these vulnerable individuals experience, we can make sure that the moment they walk through our doors they are safe.

//Food Centre Security: MAKING LUNCH SAFER

Our hungry neighbors in Minneapolis walk through our Food Centre doors every day and expect to get out of the dangerous heat or cold and eat their meal in peace. They don’t expect fights. They don’t expect an intoxicated individual creating a dangerous situation. But sometimes that’s what they get.

The other day, a man came into our office and was looking for some direction. He left, instead, with a connection. Coming from a local shelter, he wanted to know what his next step should be to find housing.

He shared his recent experiences with staying in shelters and the kind of unfortunate behavior he was experiencing from others, as well as the life circumstances that had left him homeless for several years.

When he left our office, he still had no certainty of finding housing soon, as he was still working to get connected to an agency. He did, however, leave with a warm smile. I believe that smile formed from having the opportunity to share a piece of his story and recent experiences with two people who took a few moments to listen.

I felt truly moved by the gratitude we received from him as the few minutes we spent with him was such a simple act. This man seemed more empowered to continue his journey because he received our time.

One aspect of my practice that I continue to try to improve every day is to listen better and show clients that they are heard.

I am still awed by these moments when I receive such gratitude for such brief encounters, because it represents how powerful the human connection can be when we take time to show others we see them and we acknowledge them, even if all we can give is a moment. I am often reminded by others that a simple smile or acknowledging someone personally can make all the difference to an individual who is in need of that connection, because at times that person is me.

This is why we have the opportunity to empower individuals at House of Charity; because we recognize that we are all connected through the common thread of humanity and everyone deserves the opportunity to work towards living the life they desire.

We value the time we spend with the people we serve because we recognize what a difference taking a few extra moments to connect with someone can make.

Written by Paige Dobmeier, HoC client advocate
A NOTE FROM DEB
// My House of Charity Story

Deb joined House of Charity in December of 2018 as our new CEO/Executive Director. She came to us with years of experience working with the same communities we serve. In the short time she has been here, we have seen great changes and we’re looking forward to where she’ll guide our organization in the future.

When I tell people what I do for a living, I often hear, “that’s such a wonderful thing you do.” I find it necessary to point out, “you do realize I’m getting paid, right?”

Having said that, I feel blessed every day that I can make a living providing service to our community.

Coming to House of Charity was like coming home for me. My first apartment after high school was in Elliot Park at the Drexel apartments, and my first professional position was at Eden House which is also in Elliot Park.

The residents and diners at House of Charity are who I consider my community. We have all experienced stress and lows through life and those of us that make it through safe and successfully have only been able to do so because the right people were in the right place at the right time to assist us in our journey. My vision for House of Charity is that we play that role for every one that walks through our doors. People come to us with different levels of need and we must be prepared to meet them where they are while providing high quality services that allow them to be their best selves.

I’m also always cognizant that my personal story includes my white privilege and cisgender privilege which provided me with fewer barriers and much less stress than our Communities of Color, Native American Communities and GLBTQ communities’ experience, particularly in Minnesota, which has some of the worst disparities in our country. I believe I am obligated to ensure that our agency operates in an anti-racist, pro-GLBTQ, pro-diversity including religious, age, gender and racial diversity and harassment free manner of any kind.

I attribute this belief in obligation to our entire community to my mother, a survivor of the German Holocaust, who taught me my entire life that if you wake up in your country knowing that anyone is being oppressed and you do nothing about it, you are, in fact, the oppressor.

I am committed to operating our program through the voices of those we serve. I am a firm believer that they are the experts in the needs of our community. We will continue to grow our ability to hear our consumers’ voices and develop programming accordingly.