



MEET AMBER ~ Her Dream House Has Become Reality



Like many of us, Amber dreamed about a perfect life when she grew up. However, ten years ago, Amber found herself in a situation she never thought she'd encounter: pregnant and homeless. She had decided to leave her baby's father, so she and her daughter could live a life free of issues that were becoming apparent due to his excessive drinking.

"this wasn't how I played Barbies when I was a little girl..."

Amber, who was working and going to college at the time, applied for Section 8 housing, only to find out the waiting list was closed. Amber's mother had heard of Partners for Affordable Housing's Theresa House shelter, and helped her get connected. Amber fortunately was able to move in right away.

Baby Bella came early, which came with another set of challenges. Partners' staff served as mentors and life-skills navigators, and helped Amber get into Partners' Transitional Housing program so Amber could focus on parenting, working, and going to school.

Since her time spent at Theresa House, Amber has learned the lessons of forgiveness and has made peace with Bella's father. Amber earned an Associate's Degree in Clinical Assisting, and she is now married to Scott, a former coworker, who has known Bella since she was two. He has been very supportive of her success.

"This wasn't how I played Barbies when I was a little girl," she continued, "I always thought, 'school, marriage, house, parenthood', but I took the steps in a different order. It wasn't easy, but it's made me a stronger person. Now I can look back at the struggles, see how I came

through, and know that whatever I'm facing now, I will get through it, too."

Amber and Scott have added a son to their family. They have a nice home with a yard for the children to play. Amber is happy to share that this is her Barbie Dream-house, all made possible because she got a little help when she needed it.

When asked if she had any words of wisdom for other women in her previous situation, Amber shares, "keep thinking positively and believing that you will get out. Where you are today is not where you will be tomorrow. Also celebrate small victories, like getting an A on a test or potty training your child. I hope they feel they are worthy and realize they have the ability to reach their dreams.

Amber adds, "my new dreams are to be out of debt and go back to school for a degree in nursing. Then I want us to see the world."

"Partners was a Godsend for me. I had hit rock-bottom and didn't know what resources were available to me," Amber said. "They helped me celebrate small parenting wins and encouraged me to keep persevering. They never made me feel 'less than' for being homeless."

Partners' Transitional Housing Program provides case management and rental assistance for families in similar situations to Amber's. Blue Earth County and neighboring Nicollet County are considered Severe Cost-Burdened and Cost-Burdened counties by State demographers, respectively. This program requires clients to pay 30% of their income towards rent, enabling them to catch up on expenses and save for their future.

VISION FOR ADDITIONAL HOUSING COMES TO LIFE WITH UNION STREET PLACE IN ST PETER

Before & During Updates



Last summer, you may have read about exciting news to better serve our community. A generous, anonymous ministry purchased the St. Peter Motel (located on Union Street next to Lagers in St. Peter) and gifted it to Partners in June 2018, with the vision of housing and supporting those experiencing homelessness!

“What a blessing to have someone ask ‘what do you need to house more people who don’t have a home?’” shares Jen Theneman, Executive Director for Partners for Affordable Housing. The property had operated as a drive-up motel for more than 70 years, and had great potential for a transitional housing residence, with minimal renovations.”

The vision became a reality on October 1st, when we welcomed our first family into Union Street Place. This newly updated property will house up to 20 emergency shelter guests for up to 90 days while they are supported by our team to overcome barriers to stable housing for themselves and their family.

All of the spaces are targeted at serving those who struggle financially and are working to get to a more stable, sustainable place in their lives, with a focus on single women and families with children. The hope is to obtain additional funding in the future so that all rooms may be available as emergency shelter only.

In December, the caretaker’s apartment will be converted into The Hub, a common space for shelter guests, which will offer a full kitchen, dining and living room space, computer workstations and staff office. Partners has worked to obtain grant funding and private donations to operate it as a shelter, which will utilize seven of the 13 rooms. The remaining 6 spaces include 4 month-to-month low-cost rentals and 2 rooms that are being reserved for a potential collaboration with another non-profit to serve youth fleeing violence.

“The individuals and families that have moved in this month have been so grateful for a private space to rest and re-

UNION STREET PLACE

Ready for Guests!

group,” shares Kelsey Johnson-Rode, Manager of Union Street Place. “While they are here, we can focus on the barriers that keep them not only from stable housing, but other obstacles like loss of a job, a sick family member, bad credit, a car in need of repair, pregnancy and so much more. Unless you’ve struggled with lack of income or housing, you don’t know where to start, and we can help with that during their up to 90-day stay.” Staff work with residents on determining what their needs are and either provide or connect them to obtain and overcome that hurdle. Additionally, residents work on budgets, goal setting, job searching and more. “We cover functional things like employment, budgets and more, and residents can also expect encouragement, kindness and empowerment from our staff; that in itself, can be a game changer for some,” remarks Theneman. “Our residents come for a safe place to stay, and they leave more confident, able to navigate the challenges that the lack of financial resources brings, while knowing how to advocate for themselves and their family.”



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UNDER OUR ROOF

We are blessed to do this work! There is no doubt everyday that I know this to be true. It's not all roses though... Everyday we open the door or pick up the phone to help people who are desperate; they are struggling, and don't know how to start to get back on track. Some have experienced unbelievable trauma, discrimination, judgement, addiction, mental illness and abandonment. Others have lost their home to fire, or their loved one got sick and died. Some are experiencing post traumatic stress disorder from their military service, or are fleeing from abuse, while other may experience extreme poverty or job loss. It's hard work, but our programs are necessary to help those who have lost hope remember that they have a bright future.

I'm reminded again and again of our privilege to work with so many amazing people... When a group of friends show up with a stack of gas cards to help people get to and from their jobs; when a team member creatively problem solves to overcome a client's hurdle; when the newspaper asks us about how to help people in our community understand homelessness; when our Board of Directors commits time to design on our vision for the future; when a young person says 'I want to help others who have less than me;' when a business sponsors an event or writes a check to heat the Welcome Inn for the month; when someone drops off a truck full of furniture; when people attend our fundraisers; when an individual shows up with boxes of hygiene items donated by their friends and family; when a guest that is moving out of our shelter and says 'I don't have enough words to tell you how your team has made a difference in my ability to change the course of my life. I did not have hope, and now I see possibility in every direction.'

Whether you have supported us in the past or are a current donor, I say thank you. We are blessed by your generosity, and I hope that you are blessed by knowing that you are part of an impactful patchwork of support that is a safety net for the greater community. Please consider continued support of our Mission, we need you!

In humble service,

Jen Theneman, Executive Director



By The Numbers

Locally over **300** children have been identified as homeless

1 in 4 Mankato residents live in poverty

14,000 people in Blue Earth County and Nicollet County live at or below the poverty level

Partners for Affordable Housing offers shelter for

11 families every night

Last year we hosted **1015** individuals in our emergency shelter

Partners for Affordable Housing receives

7-10 calls a day from people need of immediate shelter

45% of shelter guests are under 18, they average 5 years old

In Minnesota homelessness went up **31%** in the past 6 years

In Mankato, **36%** of renters pay more than 50% of their income on housing.

About **1 in 10** homeless adults have served in the military. 2/3 of them served more than 2 years for our country and 26% served in combat zones

Less than **1%** has current vacancy for affordable housing in Mankato- North Mankato



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MEET SISTER PAULINE ~ VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Snowstorms do not keep Sr. Pauline from arriving each workday to volunteer in our Free Store, a role that she takes very seriously. Sr. Pauline spent nearly 50 years as an Licensed Practical Nurse in Southern MN and IL, and most recently as a medical companion for School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND). When she was no longer comfortable driving, she needed something closer to home that would fit her organized and caring work ethic. A cornerstone of their commitment, SSND Sisters continue to work as they are able, in service to people with needs in the community.

"This was a good next role for me, because, as a nurse, I had to be very organized," stated Sr. Pauline. "This new vocation allows me to organize, still while serving less fortunate people."

"Everyone who comes to the Free Store to shop or contribute leaves with a smile on their face after interacting with Sr. Pauline," shares Sharon Frahm, Property Manager. "She supports our clients with love in her heart which shines through her eyes and voice. It's all in a day's work for her."

Sr. Pauline reflects, "one of my most memorable moments in the store was when a client who was down about giving all of her Christmas décor to her brother to cheer him up found out that she could get a few decorations at our store, she began to perk up and hum Christmas carols."

BOARD OF DIRECTORS STREAMLINES MISSION STATEMENT: TO GUIDE INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES ON A PATH TOWARD HOUSING STABILITY

Thanks to a grant from the Mankato Area Foundation, Partners' Board of Directors Members and Staff participated in a day-long retreat recently to review our mission, discuss current and future priorities. The group discussed goals related to increasing awareness of homelessness, continuous improvement to provide the most relevant services and support, effective organizational infrastructure, funding gaps and impact on the mission, recruitment and retention of paid staff through more competitive wages and offering benefits.

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SUPPORT PARTNERS WHEN YOU SHOP, WISH & DO

SAVE THE DATE FOR 2020 EVENTS

01.04.2020

Volunteer @ Holiday Lights

02.22.2020

Pedal Past Poverty Fundraiser

03.18.2020

A Place To Call Home
Fundraiser

04.25.2020

Sips for Shelter Fundraiser

BUY A RAFFLE TICKET

ARE UP THE SMOKER RAFFLE



GRAND PRIZE: GREEN MOUNTAIN
SMOKER + FOOD GIFT CARDS + SAUCES
\$1,500 VALUE - SMOKER COURTESY OF



2ND PRIZE: HOLIDAY GIFT BASKET
\$150 VALUE

500 Tickets Available | \$10 each
Drawing: Dec 20, 2019 @ 12:00pm

Proceeds go towards helping single women and families with children to
find rest at our emergency shelter residences and work towards stable housing



Purchase at Main Office or Call | Need not be present to win | Must be 18 years old to play

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SUPPORT OUR FAMILIES THIS HOLIDAY

Holiday Wishes

The Holidays can be a tough time for people facing homelessness. Currently, 1 in 4 people are homeless in the Mankato Area. In 2017, 1015 individuals sought out emergency shelter, and of those, 47% were children under the age of 18.

In order to make the Holiday Season a bit brighter for our Shelter Guests and Transitional Housing Clients, we encourage you to participate in the Holiday Wishes program. Call us to let us know you're committing to the program, then please purchase at least 1 item from each category below to create a family bundle.

Laundry Items

Includes laundry detergent, laundry baskets, hangers, dryer sheets, bathroom towels

Entertainment

DVDs, board games, cards, outside sports, puzzles, movie tickets

Toys

Crafts, coloring books, crayons, building blocks, play-doh, learning toys

Kitchen

Pots, pans, silverware, kitchen towels, utensils, dishes, glasses, cups

Cleaning Supplies

Broom & dust pan, cleaning wipes, cleaning spray, cleaning towels, scrub brush, air freshener,

Gift Cards

Walmart, Kwik Trip, Target, Casey's, Holiday, Aldi, grocery or other gift cards.

Please select at least one item from each category above.

SENDING FLOWERS
IN NOVEMBER



Order this beautiful 'Hope In Bloom' bouquet from Hilltop Florist in the month of November and Partners receives 20% of the order. Order today @ hilltopflorist.com/about/hopeinbloom or call 507.387.7908

OTHER IDEAS

- ◆ Shop at smile.amazon.com
- ◆ Employer Donation Matching Gifts
- ◆ Thrivent Community Action Grants
- ◆ Come to a Fundraiser
- ◆ Put together a Pedal Past Poverty team
- ◆ Sponsor a fundraiser or other project

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PARTNERS FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING



2020 MARKS 8TH
YEAR OF EVENT,
WHICH IS NEEDED
MORE THAN EVER

A FUN & FRIENDLY RACE TO SUPPORT HOMELESSNESS

*Calling all friends to pedal to raise money to support our emergency shelter residences
Theresa House and Welcome Inn in Mankato and Union Street Place in St Peter!*

Our 8th Annual Pedal Past Poverty will take place on Saturday, February 22, 2020 at the Mankato YMCA. Imagine being a part of a highly visible, high energy, fun event within our community – to benefit an incredible cause!

We need you to support our impactful mission of housing those who are experiencing financial crises and unable to afford stable housing. We have a big goal ahead of us! We need 40 teams (teams of up to 10) and personal or corporate sponsors to help us reach our goal of \$100,000 this year!

Last year, we were not able to cover all of the operational expense of running the shelter through fundraisers and grants – Your financial support is vital in keeping shelter operations in the black. The emergency shelter program is critical to support fresh starts and stability to the women, children and families that don't have anywhere else to turn.

Anyone can put together a team – whether competitive or for fun – it's ideal for groups, families, churches, co-workers, neighbors, businesses – our youngest rider last year was 6 and our oldest was 81 years young! For more information about how to put together a team, to sponsor, or support financially, visit www.partnersforhousing.org!



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BUY A TICKET FOR OUR 'FIRE UP THE SMOKER' RAFFLE
NOW THROUGH 12.20.2019
FOR A CHANCE TO WIN A GREEN MOUNTAIN SMOKER & MORE!



Congratulations to our
e-Newsletter subscriber,
Annette Vanderplas,
winner of the gift basket
pictured to the left.



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