A Story of Success—Missie Sexton

Today, you would be surprised to hear about Missie’s turbulent past. Confident and well-spoken, she tells her tragic story with a startling openness.

“Before I came to Shalom I was real close with my family and pretty much just had a normal life. Then I got addicted to drugs and lost everything.”

Missie was homeless on and off for five years, sleeping nights at the Interfaith Winter Shelter and Genesis Summer Shelter. But she dug herself out of homelessness by using the services at Shalom.

“I’ve been clean for four years. I got my GED through Shalom. I took classes here and then went to Ivy Tech. I decided to major in criminal justice because I know a lot of people who are in trouble with the law. A lot of people I’ve met here just need help.”

“If Shalom wasn’t here I probably would have been in a mental hospital somewhere or a lot worse than what I was. I could have died or just been much worse on drugs. But I became sober and decided it wasn’t the life for me.”

Missie is also a budding artist and had her photography featured in the December issue of Bloom magazine. When not studying to become a parole officer, Missie is listening to country music and planning for her wedding in May.

When asked what advice she has for people experiencing homelessness, Missie simply states, “Don’t give up, it does get better. It takes a while but it does get better.”

Written by Alexandra Smith, SPEA Intern

Who’s Staying at a Friend’s Place?

Martha’s House, Inc. was in trouble. After years of struggle with finances and management, they were no longer able to operate the only year-round, nonreligious, overnight emergency shelter for adults in 7 counties.

While the nonprofit that ran the shelter folded, the community rallied to save this essential community service for people in need.

In December, the Bloomington Urban Enterprise Association made an unprecedented gift of $7,000 to Martha’s House, Inc. to pay off its debts. Then they made an unprecedented gift of $250,000 to the Bloomington Community Foundation to match future gifts up to $75,000 per year. In 2016, the Bloomington City Council and Mayor’s Office, the Monroe County Council & Commissioners, the Community Foundation, New Hope Family Shelter, Shalom, and others jumped in with advice and financial support.

On the Front Lines of Hunger and Homelessness

The Newsletter of Shalom Community Center

February 2016

DIGNITY

Shalom—For All Who Seek Home

Our Mission

The Shalom Community Center is a 501(c)(3) dedicated to aiding and empowering people experiencing homelessness and poverty. As a comprehensive resource center for people who are living in poverty and experiencing its ultimate expressions, Shalom provides daytime and overnight shelter, hunger relief, life essentials, case management, street outreach, housing support, including rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing, employment assistance, and community access for many government and social service agencies.

Our Vision

Shalom Community Center envisions a community that honors every person’s fundamental right to sustenance, a safe home, quality health care, and meaningful work. We see ourselves as a key leader in providing the full range of support and services for people dealing with poverty and homelessness in South Central Indiana.

How You Can Help:

Give: To support us financially, you can give online by credit card at www.shalomcommunitycenter.org or you can mail a check to:

Shalom Community Center
P.O. Box 451, Bloomington, IN 47402-0451

Volunteer: To offer your time and talent, contact Mark Emerson, Volunteer Coordinator, at mark@shalomcommunitycenter.org.

Donate: To donate items of need, see our wish list at www.shalomcommunitycenter.org.

Questions?: Contact us at (812) 334-5734 or shalom@shalomcommunitycenter.org.

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Seeing Things Differently

Did you see the article in the December issue of Bloom Magazine, featuring the photography of people experiencing homelessness?

Have you made it to Pictura Gallery for the show?

Prejudice strikes so deeply at the heart of our collective work to end homelessness in our community. As people open up to the humanness of those without homes, transformation becomes possible.

Twelve homeless photographers from ages four to seventy shared their perspective with us, opening our eyes to the world in a different way.

Thank you to Ray, Isaac, Brandi, Galin, Deidre, Jerald, Ron, Amelia, Mike, Teddy, Missie, Alivia, & Darla for their captivating photographs.

Extraordinary thanks to Pictura Gallery and Bloom Magazine for funding and presenting this life-changing project.

$150,000 to fund the shelter in its first year and $200,000 in matching funds to help build long-term stability years into the future."

In January, Shalom took on the management of this important work. The shelter was renamed “Friend’s Place” to help remove the stigma of staying in a shelter. A guest of the shelter now can respond to the question of where they are staying simply as a friend’s place to avoid the negative associations that come with being homeless.

Shalom Center will undergo a 3 month transition and evaluation period to determine how to move forward as effectively as possible, blending the best of Martha’s House and Shalom’s wisdom, skill, and history.

Shalom is excited to announce the hiring of Nikki Reising as the program manager for the shelter. Formerly one of Shalom Center’s Street Outreach Workers, Nikki will spend the next few months learning and absorbing as much information as possible to make Friend’s Place a success.

The ultimate mission of Friend’s Place will be to move people from shelter to a home as quickly as possible. Friend’s Place will remain a sober shelter while investing in client-centered case management and an assortment of tailored housing approaches, including housing first, rapid re-housing, and subsidized housing.

Reising states, “Ideally we want to work ourselves out of a job; ideally we don’t want homelessness in Bloomington anymore.”

The shelter will also benefit from the many amazing partnerships Shalom has developed with other agencies, including LifeDesigns, Centerstone, Volunteers in Medicine, Indiana Legal Services, WorkOne, the Bloomington Police Department, countless landlords, and more.

*Look for details this May when we kick off the campaign for the $200,000 match.

Written by Rev. Forrest Gilmore, Executive Director with the assistance of Alexandra Smith, SPEA Intern