

Ruth's House

"THE FIRST DUTY OF **LOVE** IS TO **LISTEN.**"

- Paul Tillich



Cover art designed by former resident

ANNUAL REPORT 2017

More than a house, a home



Contact us

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Dear Friends of Ruth's House,

I wanted to share with you a poem that was written by a homeless person. The author of the poem is unknown.....

The unwanted child
Who has done everything to fit in.
Wanting to be part of something. Anything.
Yet finding no one and nowhere.
Finding no group or family to belong to,
So staying all alone.
Here I am alone again.
Wishing for parents even though I am grown.
Wondering if the longing will ever go away.
To be taken in, nurtured, and loved.
Would I even know if I saw it?
What would it be like?
How would it feel?
I guess some things I may never know....



I hope this person found the love, nurturing, and home everyone deserves. Many of the residents who come into Ruth's House feel alone, unloved, wounded, and abandoned. It is a devastating feeling ... desperate loneliness with no hope. But thanks to your support Ruth's House is able to provide hope and healing to women and children who find themselves trapped in a spirit-crushing, life altering, domestic violence situation. In the Biblical story of Ruth (our namesake) it is about the power of a redeeming love that can change a person's life. "Where you go, I will go." Together with your support and the compassion and love of staff, through action, we can make our community safer and healthier in abundance. It takes over \$500 a day to operate the shelter. Today I ask you to prayerfully consider a monetary investment into our community's future by making a contribution to the ministry of Ruth's House. Peace, love, and blessings to you.

With gratitude and faith,

Ruth Hickey, Executive Director



Why I Volunteer

By Joyce Elsen, Volunteer

I was recently asked why I became a Ruth's House volunteer. I was married and working a full-time job with a 2 and 3 yr old. I had filed for divorce and I knew I wasn't safe, but when I started worrying about the kids' safety we moved in with my mom and stepdad, then moved back into our house and my older brother stayed with us for a few weeks. Moving into a shelter was suggested, but I was lucky enough to have the support of my family, who lived within an hour of us.

I quickly learned I needed to make and save money as child support was hit and miss. I also knew that I was living paycheck to paycheck and I needed to get ahead. So besides my full time job I started a part-time sales job. Most of the sales work was done from home, but sometimes the kids came with me on calls. I had the kids most of the time, so they went everywhere with me and learned all about volunteer work at our church, Community Action Council, and the college I worked at.

The kids were so young then and have no recollection of those first few years on our own but I will never forget how devastated I felt. I felt so broken, hurt, betrayed, numb, alone,

and empty and I wondered if I would ever be in control of my life again. So when I heard about Ruth's House, I knew the pain some of the women were going through and knew I had to help. I know that whatever volunteer task I help with frees up time for the staff to work directly with the women and children. And any money that I help to fundraise helps keep the doors open at Ruth's House. I want the women and children to feel safe, loved, understood, and know that they can get their feet back on the ground and feel whole again. So this is why I am one of the many volunteers at Ruth's House.

Not all storms come to disrupt your life, some come to clear your path.

It took us a few years to get through the hard times but we all grew from those hard times and had a happy life. Those days are many years behind us and I know how lucky we were. I'm blessed to give back and those two and three year old children are thriving adults and blessings in their communities. I could not be more proud of the responsible, compassionate individuals they have become.

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Hope Blossoms

A mother fleeing domestic violence with two children came to the shelter at Ruth's House with no place to live, nothing to eat, and no family in Minnesota. Staff could immediately see the mother loved her children very much but there were some concerns staff had about her oldest child, four year old Charles. He did not talk except for gibberish and was showing aggressive behavior toward his mother, sister, and others. Charles had a difficult time listening to his mother, instead he would slap her face or punch and scream at her until she would break down and give him what he wanted. Charles gets overwhelmed very easily so any loud noise such as yelling, screaming, or crying would lead him to stick his pointer finger in his mouth, crawl under a table, and self-soothe to sleep.

Knowing that working with a child with these behaviors can be physically and emotionally draining, the educational staff and mother agreed it was best to focus on one goal at a time. First, mom and staff created a daily schedule for both children. This schedule helped Charles to know what he needed to do first, and then what he needed to do next, and so on throughout the day. Next, staff suggested that Charles have early intervention evaluations to determine if he was cognitively/developmentally appropriate for his age. Two

weeks of testing revealed that Charles had been immensely traumatized with all of the domestic violence he had witnessed in his young life. In addition, he was developmentally behind other children his age since he had never been introduced to them.

Over the course of four months, mom enrolled Charles into an early intervention program at the local learning center. Mom established clear rules at the shelter and was consistent enforcing them. This was no easy task, and at times mom wanted to give up and give into his crying and demands. Mom and Charles worked very hard every day and on the days which were frustrating and disappointing, Ruth's House staff re-assured mom that his behaviors would get better.

Charles is not the same frightened child he used to be. He now uses his words and follows directions. By attending preschool he learned how to work with others and how to tell people how he is feeling without hitting. Charles and mom worked hard to create a consistent routine which allowed him to feel safe by knowing what was to come next and what to do when he is feeling overwhelmed, mad, sad, angry, or just needed a hug. We are thrilled to report the relationship between mom and Charles has finally blossomed.



There will be many chapters in your life, don't get lost in the one you're in now.

..... 2017 Accomplishments



7,000 Nights
of Safe Housing

Became a member of the
Mental and Chemical Health Coalition

Held Naloxone training for staff

Opened Northfield Outreach office at All Saints

Completed repairs: new roof, landscaping, 2nd floor bathroom

Received a grant from Allina's Neighborhood Health Connections
and implemented Healthy Lifestyle Program

Children's programming enhanced resulting in
early intervention and support

Staff and board attended Bridges Out of Poverty workshop

Held Open House in coordination with Give to the Max Day

Supportive Housing Clients connected to resources to become
more independent and plugged into community



We received over
\$30,000

from in-kind donations from hundreds of individuals
and several groups and organizations.

Volunteers donated over
4,000 HOURS

of their time, helping with fundraising events, administrative
duties, transportation and childcare for residents, IT
assistance, house repairs, and marketing/program
development and implementation.



HOMELESS & ALONE

She vividly remembers her first morning at Ruth's House after waking up from working the night shift. She walked downstairs to get acquainted with the layout of the shelter, grabbed a cup of coffee, met with our Program Manager, and then felt safe enough to share her story.

Amanda was referred to Ruth's House by the Rice County Sheriff's Department. They found her sleeping on playground slides around town. She came to Minnesota from Nevada with her then husband who turned abusive and soon kicked her out of her own home, keeping her from her two preschool aged children. With only the clothes on her back, two shirts, and two pairs of pants, Ruth's House immediately fulfilled her physical needs providing her with food, clothing, hygiene products, and a safe place to sleep.

Amanda worked with staff to come up with a plan forward. She was given rides to the Hope

Center which helped provide court advocacy so she could gain shared custody of her children.

Along with staff, soon she noticed that her four year old son exhibited behavior issues such as anger and aggression. Her case manager at Ruth's House suggested that she take a break from work to focus on her children now that she was safe at the shelter.

Ruth's House staff connected Amanda with the resources she needed to seek help for her son who was later diagnosed with ADHD and autism. Amanda said that staff led by example and taught her how to be a patient mother by first calming herself down before helping her kids.

The change in her son over the next four months was amazing! Amanda is happy to report that her son shows his true personality by helping others and being a kind, caring

HOMELESS & ALONE *continued*

child. When he senses that his mom is having a hard day, he hugs her and says, "Mommy, it's ok." Amanda says that her youngest daughter now emulates her big brother's positive behavior and being at Ruth's House has helped her learn right from wrong.

Without this support, Amanda thinks her son would still be out of control. She participates in family therapy once a week and that gives her a space to discuss new behaviors which may crop up as a result of the trauma her son experienced.

Before arriving at Ruth's House, Amanda felt alone with no support. It was hard for her to accept that the staff were there to help her on her journey and that it was ok to ask for help, but in time she felt more comfortable. She now knows that she can talk to staff at anytime and she doesn't have to go it alone.

Amanda shared, "Ruth's House helped me find daycare so I could return to work to support my family and I found a job working daytime hours.

My goals are to get my own apartment, continue to support my kids, and go back to school to become a vet tech. Someday I want to move up

to a house I can call mine with a yard where my kids can play. I am making the right decisions now and I am on a straight path.

They helped me regain my confidence and now I know that I can do it.

Ruth's House gave me safety, comfort, and help. They gave me back hope, my kids, and my confidence to secure a job. I can handle any situation that comes my way because I know I can call and ask for advice. Ruth's House has become my family and I have felt welcomed, loved, and accepted for who I am. Without Ruth's House, I wouldn't be around. This was the best thing that ever happened in my life."

Ruth's House means more than a shelter, according to Amanda. It's a place where she started to make her family, and started to make her life. She said her son will remember that we were there to help. She feels more connected to the community and now she can be the person she wanted to be and a good mother to her children.

FINANCIALS

12 Months Ended December 31, 2017

INCOME	
Donations	\$110,750
Fundraising	\$81,216
Grants	\$129,852
Other	\$42,812
HUD Program	\$172,025
Total Income	\$536,654
EXPENSE	
Administration	\$16,506
Payroll	\$251,692
Programming/Operations	\$190,571
Other	\$12,893
Total Expense	\$471,662
Net Income	\$64,992

2017 RUTH'S HOUSE STATISTICS

Emergency/Transitional Shelter # women 13 and # children 44 Average length of stay 120 days 45% of women experienced domestic violence Total people served 79	Permanent Supportive Housing Units # women 13 and # men 0 # children 29 80% of women experienced domestic violence Average length of stay 2-3 years Total people served 42
Total people served as a whole 121	



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of safe shelter to homeless women and children