

Ruth's House



A *Safe* Place to Land

ANNUAL REPORT 2016

More than a house, a home





Dear Friends of Ruth's House,

Since opening we have served over 800 children. The ministry of Ruth's House loves children; they are very important to us. We offer them every opportunity to grow emotionally, mentally and physically. If we do one thing and one thing only to give the children a safe place to call home, then we have been successful. Little people (children) are my favorite part of Ruth's House. As I watch them learn, grow, give hugs, kisses and loves, I am reminded of the responsibility required of us all. We as a community together must help to educate, nurture, provide food and safe shelter to our youngest citizens, especially those who are vulnerable and homeless. The children are our future.

Many of the children we serve have experienced trauma. Childhood trauma can affect children's lives in many ways. It is proven that trauma in children can have serious consequences that manifest as adults to include disease, brain damage, emotional and mental health issues. Trauma includes homelessness, lack of stable housing, neglect, witnessing abuse, physical and sexual abuse. 90% of Ruth's House residents we polled have experienced some form of trauma as a child.

Through our transitional and long term supportive housing program we have witnessed children become healthier and more resilient because at Ruth's House they find love, stability, and a nurturing environment. Staff offer a loving presence in the home as they work with moms on parenting through support, resources and classes. Your support provides our littlest citizens a safe place to call home and an opportunity not just for safety but an opportunity to thrive. Last week I was able to see the fruits of our labor when a former resident came in with her almost grown daughter. She is an amazing young woman! This is proof that together we make a difference in children's lives in our community, today and for the future.

Thank you so much for your past support. It costs over \$500 a day to operate our transitional 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.

With gratitude and faith,

Ruth Hickey



DEVELOPING CHILDREN

Cognitively & Emotionally

By Meghan Sawicki, Case Manager



The mission of Ruth's House is to provide transitional housing in a safe, supportive, and healing environment, helping women and their children start their way to new beginnings. The women and children we serve come to us from very different situations to include domestic violence in the home, addiction, homelessness and other health challenges.

Ruth's House works with these women to help them gain financial stability, emotional health and the ability to make healthy life choices for their families.

Many of the children have been exposed to violence and negative environmental factors which impact their daily lives and can have significant impact on the child's mental health and cognitive development. One way that Ruth's House works with the moms and children is by aiding them with parenting when the children are having difficulty expressing themselves in an appropriate manner. For example, many of the children that reside at Ruth's House lack consistency and routine in their daily lives.

Some ways staff assist mothers is by providing support to children emotionally and cognitively.

- Creating a daily schedule with pictures and symbols- this allows children to clearly see what they will be doing during a specific

timeframe. This will increase predictability for the child as well as security.

- Creating a visual schedule also provides the child with the ability to gain independence. If a child looks at their visual schedule they will be able to tell what needs to happen next, which gives them confidence in themselves. This will then lead a child to initiate the routines consistently.
- Using visual pictures and symbols to increase the child's understanding of

verbal directions, pairing visual cues/ pictures to mom's words, and enhancing their receptive language.

- The visual schedules and verbal language used together increase the likelihood that the child will learn how to make word associations.

The goal is to help mothers feel more secure in their parenting and to impress on the children what is expected of them. When the child feels secure with a parent the more fun a child will have and less misbehaving will occur.

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2016 Accomplishments

RUTH'S HOUSE: NEW LOGO & WEBSITE!



ruthshousemn.org

The new logo expresses the safe and nurturing environment Ruth's House provide to many women and families each year. Purple, a prominent color in the organization's new graphic identity, is the signature color for domestic violence, which is an issue in the lives of many who seek help from Ruth's House.

The completely new website at ruthshousemn.org matches the organization's new look and is user-friendly on all devices, including smartphones and tablets. Thank you to Neuger Communications for all their work. Other features include:



For women in crisis, an application form that quickly begins the process of getting victims of homelessness or unsafe homes into a secure, supportive environment.



The current Needs List, a frequently updated list of items the shelter needs. This provides guidance to the generous supporters who donate household and personal care products to Ruth's House.



Volunteer opportunities for individuals and groups to support the upkeep of the shelter and the women and children who live there.



Opportunities to donate much-needed funds, including ways to "donate your birthday" to support Ruth's House.



Videos on the home page describing the impact Ruth's House has on the lives of its residents, as well as the repair needs for the house, which dates to the 1890s.

Ruth's House's new graphic identity and the website design and development were donated by Neuger Communications Group, based in Northfield and Minneapolis, who recognize the tremendous positive impact Ruth's House makes in Faribault and Rice County.

The Mary Kay Foundation has selected Ruth's House as a 2016 recipient of a \$20,000 grant

In an article in the *Faribault Daily News*, Ruth's House Executive Director Ruth Hickey commented on the timeliness of the grant, which will be used for programming for the women and children living at Ruth's House.

"We want to keep the doors open so we can staff our shelter 24 hours a day and provide our residents the opportunity to heal and grow in a safe shelter," Hickey said.

Mary Kay consultant Jean Wakely, of Northfield, was instrumental in encouraging Ruth's House to keep applying for this grant. This year, that persistence was rewarded.



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.

We received over **\$30,000** from in-kind donations from hundreds of individuals and several groups and organizations.

We Also Accomplished....

- New Mission, Vision, and Values statement facilitated with assistance from Mary Upham and Neuger Communications
- Staff participated in Youth Mental Health training and learned the signs and symptoms to watch for in young adults and youth.
- Hosted National Night Out at the shelter - an annual community event that promotes police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie to make our neighborhoods safer, more caring places to live.



{ IN HER Own Words }

Ruth's House opened up so many opportunities for me. Not just as a safe environment for myself and my kids but more than that. The staff helped me through so many difficult times in my life and they did this without judgment. It was kind of like my own on call therapist. And they helped me with positive choices that affected me and my kids. They made me feel cared about when so many others didn't. They have fully helped me get my life back on track and to continue being a great mom for my kids.

I was able to get Section 8 housing through the Bridges program, an opportunity I never knew existed. I am able to continue my treatment and remain in a sober and safe environment. I am very thankful for all the love and genuine care I have received here as well as for my kids. I can't even go into depth on how positive this experience has been. I am a picture of gratitude for everything Ruth's House has done for me.

My hope for the future is already coming true so far as I still take it one day at a time. My family is coming together in a full circle, my kids know mom is safe, so they are able to be kids again, to live a sober living lifestyle with my kids.

I give thanks and praise to the Lord and Ruth's House for all their help in making me a better person and giving me that chance to show it when no one cared. - JB

TRAUMATIZED Heart

By Wendy Swanson, House Supervisor

♥ Each year in the United States approximately five million children suffer from some sort of a traumatic event. Traumatic experiences can be a death of a loved one, physical or emotional abuse or the loss of a home to name a few. These experiences can have a devastating impact on a child. Changing their physical, emotional, cognitive and social development. The brain develops in response to their family or community and the quality of those experiences affects whether a child will develop a strong or weak foundation for future learning, behavior, and their health.

♥ Ruth's House of Hope is an amazing place for women, especially the children, to land on their feet and have a safe place to call home. Ruth's House of Hope is dedicated to empowering every soul who walks through our doors. The children have a special place in Ruth Hickey's heart along with all the staff and volunteers at Ruth's House. The staff have a huge opportunity to step into a child's life and offer them respect, nurturing relationships, and a stable environment.

♥ Many of these kids have come from a domestic violence situation. They have experienced fear, sadness, and loneliness. They tend to shut down around people because they are afraid to be hurt emotionally.

♥ Recently the house was invited to Shields lake for pontoon rides and a picnic sponsored by the The Shields Lake Association. This was a wonderful event where the moms can relax and the kids can run around and be kids. One of the new little girls had been watching me for a while and was not quite sure if I was ok yet. We both ended up on the same pontoon that evening. She sat on one end down by her mom while I was on the other. Midway through the pontoon ride she slowly began to move towards my end of the boat. She decided to sit down next to me and leaned over the side. She made me nervous and I asked her if I could lean over with her. She said ok. This little girl began talking about her new favorite movie Moana. She asked me if I thought Moana was searching for the heart stone. That started the ball rolling. By the end of the pontoon ride she was on my lap and laughing at the waves. We got off of the pontoon and she grabbed my hand and asked if I could be her new best friend.

FINANCIALS

12 Months Ended December 31, 2016

INCOME

Donations	\$95,115
Fundraising	\$51,070
Grants	\$70,814
Other	\$37,566
HUD Program	\$183,443
Total Income	\$438,008

EXPENSE

Administration	\$11,118
Payroll	\$237,167
Programming/Operations	\$165,203
Other	\$19,353
Total Expense	\$432,841
Net Income	\$5,167

2016 RUTH'S HOUSE STATISTICS

Emergency/Transitional Shelter	# women 43 # children 48
Average length of stay 120 days	45% of women experienced domestic violence
Total people served 91	
Permanent Supportive Housing Units	# women 14 and # men 3 # children 27
80% of women experienced domestic violence	Average length of stay 2-3 years
Total people served 48	

Total people served as a whole 139



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