# Ruth's House

For there is always light if only we're brave enough to see it, if only we're brave enough to be it -Amanda Gorman

**ANNUAL REPORT 2020** 

## More than help, HOPe





## Contact us

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#### Dear Friend,

One of my most memorable moments of 2020 was during our Christmas party at the shelter. Traditionally, Santa visits in person to hear wishes of our youngest residents and hands out a small gift to each child. Last year, Santa and his elves didn't forget about Ruth's House but showed up via Zoom! We weren't sure how this would be received but pure joy was felt as the children gathered around a computer screen in the living room to sing Jingle Bells and ask Santa all sorts of very important questions. It's my prayer that all our residents can remember moments of joy and peace while reflecting on their stay at Ruth's House.

Thankfully, our residents were kept safe during the pandemic. We



opened the doors to Sarah's House which allowed us to serve even more women. The need for shelter in our community is great and will continue as we navigate the

coming years. It's bigger than you and I can imagine.

In this report, Pastor Jeff kindly acknowledges the importance of the work of our staff at Ruth's House, especially during 2020/2021. Ruth's House operates on a budget of over \$1000 per day. Like many other vital organizations, we are faced with staffing shortages. As we look toward the future, we need your support more than ever to be able to offer competitive wages for our staff who help light the path for women and children in our community. **Would you prayerfully consider making a donation today?** 

Last year, 13 homeless shelters in Southern Minnesota closed during the pandemic. Blessedly, we were able to keep Ruth's House open. We were once again reminded that we're not alone on our journey. Our community, staff, board, volunteers, grantors, and donors showed up for our organization in hopes that we continue our mission in the face of adversity. I'm grateful to each of you for your prayers and support. Thank you for showing up so, together, we can show up for those who need us most.

With gratitude,

Suzzanne Fox Executive Director



## From Hopelessness to Empowerment: Lucy's Story



Home had become a difficult and unpredictable place, leaving Lucy living in a hotel room with her premature infant son.

Lucy shares, "I'd run out of money and had nowhere to go. I was referred to Ruth's House and was so happy when we were accepted! The staff were friendly, which helped me feel more comfortable. The personal support that I got meant the world to me! My case manager worked with me as I set goals and gave me a lot of encouragement and the resources to help me work towards my goals."

When Lucy first arrived at Ruth's House, she struggled to connect with her son, and she lacked the skills and understanding to properly care for an infant. Her health was in jeopardy, she was unemployed, and Lucy had lost hope. Staff shares, "It was such a joy to watch Lucy begin to bond with her son! She was playing with him, reading to him, cuddling him, and it wasn't long before he'd captured her heart. Lucy was taking charge of her own health, meeting with our financial planning volunteer to gain understanding around budgeting, saving, and increasing her credit score, and she was planning for her future!"

Lucy recently moved into her own apartment and is enrolled in college. She went from feeling stuck in her circumstances to a renewed hope as she got back on her feet. She shares, "I'm excited to continue to grow with my son, and I'm excited about my future! I'm thankful to Ruth's House and the support and help they gave me. It empowered me to find my voice so I could set healthy boundaries for my life, take charge of my health, become confident as a mother, and realize that I can do anything I put my mind to!"

\* Name changed for privacy

"Ruth's House empowered me to find my voice so I could set healthy boundaries for my life, take charge of my health, become confident as a first-time mother, and realize I can do anything I set my mind to!"

## **Leading Light**



The work that Ruth's House of Hope does is nothing short of miraculous. I've witnessed the miracles with my own eyes. For that, I thank God. I thank the women and children with whom we partner. I thank

our generous supporters. And, I thank our dedicated volunteers and board members. Many thanks!

But, right now, I want to extend a special word of thanks to our staff.

This last year has been marked by challenges no one could have foreseen. Yet, in response, our staff members have done exceptional work. They have been compassionate, committed, innovative, and more. They have embodied the mission ofRuth's house. They have responded to the call to care through sacrificial service and with real grace.

Suzzanne Fox, our Executive Director, regularly reports to me about how our staff members make a difference every day. She's right. And she leads the way by doing the same.

So, staff members, one and all, thank you for being who you are and for doing what you do!

Pastor Jeff Sandgren Our Savior's Lutheran Church

"The support that I received from my case manager, the staff at Ruth's House, and my community helped me realize my dream of getting my own apartment. **My children and I feel safe, and that means everything!**"





### 2019-2020 Board of Directors

Pastor Jeff Sandgren, Chairperson Joyce Elsen, Vice-Chair Person Sandra Gerdes, Treasurer Heather Robins, Secretary Chuck Budde Kathy Tonolli Pat Johnson Madison VanErp

### **Ruth's House Staff**

Suzzanne Fox, Executive Director Meghan S, Program Director Sandy V, Outreach & Communications Coordinator Casi C, Operations and Development Specialist Sherri S, Lead Family Advocate Amy D, Manager of Client Services, Case Manager Bridget H, Family Advocate Briana T, Family Advocate Oogami S, Family Advocate Megan H, Family Advocate Rachel O, Family Advocate Abby Stroup, Family Advocate

## RUTH'S HOUSE OF HOPE

#### THE MISSION AND GOAL

Ruth's House is a nonprofit Emergency and Transitional Shelter with supportive services in Rice County, Minnesota for women and children struggling with homelessness due to domestic violence or other traumatic life circumstances such as illness, disability, substance use disorders, or poverty. Our Transitional Shelter Program, funded entirely by community donations and foundation grants, serves individuals both by meeting their immediate need for safe shelter, food, and basic needs and by helping them overcome barriers to self-sufficiency and stable, permanent housing.

#### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Empowering lives, offering hope through transitional housing and support.

#### **THE PROGRAM**

Ruth's House Emergency and Transitional Shelter can accommodate nine families of women and their children for up to 60 days in emergency circumstances and up to 4 months as a transition to permanent housing, with the option of an additional 6 months to address more difficult barriers to self-sufficiency. Ruth's House offers individualized supportive programming that helps families stabilize and work towards increasing life skills and selfdetermination so they can break the cycle of poverty and homelessness. The programs at Ruth's House are flexible and individually tailored to meet each resident's unique needs. Individualized self-sufficiency plans include self-identified short and long-term goals and encompass health and wellness, employment, financial stability, and housing stability.

The sun set on Ruth's House HUD funded Permanent Supportive Housing Program in August of 2020, and rose on Ruth's House newest Pillar, Sarah's House, a sober living home for women, launched in October of 2020. Ruth's House was able to help all of our families in our PSH program secure stable housing and case management.

"My case manager encouraged me to never give up! She advocated for me and my children, and as a result, my children and I now have our own apartment where we feel safe and are thriving!"

## **2020 RESIDENTS SUCCESSES**

Transitional Shelter Program # women served 18 # children served 28

> Sarah's House # women served 1

Permanent Supporting Housing Program # women 14 # children 15 Total served 76 Over 7,000 nights of safe shelter provided yearly

56% of residents were fleeing domestic violence. 80% had experienced domestic violence at some point in their lives. \$300 Monthly On average, residents increased their monthly income.

5 Women persued education including obtaining their GED and enrolling in postsecondary education. 100% received safe shelter, food, basic needs, and supportive services.

## Your Contributions at Work!

RESTORED six structural pillars on the facade of the house which not only hold importance as a key architectural feature of this historic home, but also hold up the third floor space which is home to three families, as well as our Multi-Sensory Room, thanks to our Pillars of Support and funds raised at our 2020 Hearts Gala.

REPLACED all 28 mattresses with brand new mattresses, thanks to a grant from Open Your Heart and help from Knights of Columbus in disposing of the old ones.

**UPDATED** old, outdated computers and technology needs with a grant from Otto Bremer and volunteer tech support from E3 Retail.

**EVENTS** included Ruth's House 1st Annual Helping Hearts Event/Gala, Farewell to Ruth Hickey, Ruth's House Founding Executive Director, led by our Faribault Police and Fire Department, and Sarah's House Dedication.

**LAUNCHED** Ruth's House newest Pillar, Sarah's House, in Fall of 2020



## 4,000 HOURS

Of their time, talents, and creativity in unprecedented times with devotion to the mission of Ruth's House.

Volunteers helped with administrative duties to help keep our Outreach office afloat during an extremely busy time. Others joined our 1st Annual Helping Hearts committee and walked alongside us as we pivoted from an in-person, to a virtual event. Many hours and meetings went into brainstorming, planning, and making our Helping Hearts Event successful!

Individuals and volunteer groups from St. Peter's and Our Savior's Lutheran Church helped us get our new sober home ready to launch, making Sarah's House welcoming with a comfortable, safe, warm, homey vibe.

Ruth's House couldn't have done any of this without our volunteers and their support, ideas, creativity, hard work, and dedication. **THANK YOU!** 

## \$40,000

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

## FINANCIALS

12 Months Ended December 31, 2020

Net Income	\$8,810
Total Expense	\$547,225
Programming/Operations	\$180,270
Payroll	\$343,317
Administration	\$26,638
EXPENSE	
Total Income	\$556,035
HUD Program	\$117,922
Other	\$1,907
Grants	\$107,573
Fundraising	\$184,933
Donations	\$143,700
INCOME	

Barbara Ackerman

Boldt Funeral Home

### **SAINTS**

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### "I truly believe that God answered my prayers when he opened the door to Ruth's House for me and my children! I found a new way of life, a healthier, happier way."

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Thank you to Ashley Olson for donating time and designing this Annual Report.





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Because of your support and contributions, last year we were able to provide over

