

# Ruth Meiers Hospitality House



*every heart needs a home*

An Equal Opportunity Program

1800 E. Broadway Ave. • P.O. Box 2092 • Bismarck, ND 58502 • (701) 222-2108

A United Way Agency

## *Happy Holidays,*

It is hard to believe that another year is winding down and we will soon enter a new one. We want to take this time to thank all of you for your generous support of Ruth Meiers Hospitality House again this year. By working together we can make a difference in the lives of so many men, women and children who need our help.

We would like to share some stories about people whose lives we touched this year.

Joe, a man experiencing homelessness who stayed in our shelter "I came to Ruth Meiers Hospitality House in March of 2009. I had lost my apartment and my job was ending because of government funding. What to do? I felt unsure, but why not! In the past I had put a hand out to others in need, now it was my turn to accept.

Ruth Meiers made no assumed judgments about me or my past. There were simple rules to follow, but rules are everywhere. No problem! I met some very understanding people, and again no judging. They asked if I had a plan. Yes, I did. I stayed at the shelter, did my assigned duties without any pressure at all.

A few months went by (five actually) and an apartment opened up at the Ruth Meiers' HORIZONS building. I asked about the apartment and was allowed to rent it. What to do about furnishings? I was told they would be provided at no cost. Some staff members knew I was moving and asked if they could provide me with some items. Permission was given and my apartment was furnished. The cost – just friendship and a thank you.

I appreciate the help very much. Now, not only do I have an apartment, but I have a job working with kids that I enjoy very much. It's never too late to change and better oneself. Help and friendship is a two-way street. I didn't doubt myself, but just needed help over some bumps. Ask and receive!"

### **Dear Ruth Meyers Hospitality House Staff:**

I was homeless not too long ago with nowhere to live in Bismarck. I wanted to thank you for being so kind, considerate and understanding and giving me a place to live with my children when we had nowhere to go. I had just moved from another state and took on a new job (with a broken ankle). It was very challenging and quite frustrating at times. You may not have thought much of the small kind actions you did, but to someone temporarily disabled and homeless, giving me a home temporarily spoke volumes to me.

I'm an Assiniboine "Nakota" Native American from the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation in Montana. "Penomniya" means thank you in my Nakota language. I was raised by very, very traditional "Whiteclay" Gros-Ventre (I'm ½ Whiteclay as well) Native American grandparents. It is our custom to show great respect to others, especially our leaders and elders. It's in my nature and my Native American way to be giving. In fact, in our cultural tradition we have what are called "give-away" ceremonies to show our gratitude towards others. It is our belief that we were blessed by our Creator/God to have many people to be blessings in our "Circle of Life" (life that connects like a circle).



In a culturally diverse world, I believe that Native Americans need to learn to bring understanding and build bridges instead of burning bridges, and stop pushing other nationalities, races, and cultures away from us. I believe "Waakan Taanka, God/Creator/Great Spirit" made us all equal in His image. Therefore, we should learn as Native Americans and Non-Native Americans to have peace and understanding between cultures. That is the traditional, original way of my Native American people.

With much Native American love and respect,

*Iris L. Main,*

*"Woods Bee Weeaa"*

(This is my Indian Name, Berry Picking Woman in Nakota.)

# *Season's Greetings*



# Jennifer, A Woman Experiencing Homelessness

*We are here  
for you!*



When Jennifer came to us in February, she didn't know a soul in North Dakota – she was exhausted and had traveled for over 24 hours by bus as she says, “With my entire life tucked into two suitcases, a trunk, and a backpack, to find a fresh start and financial independence.”

Jennifer is 55 years old, divorced, and has two grown children who have their own families to take care of. In her home town in Indiana, her job had been eliminated when the call center she worked at full-time closed shortly after Hurricane Katrina. She says, “Effects of the hurricane were immediate and opportunities for jobs that paid a living wage all but dried up.” Not wanting to uproot and leave her grown children, Jennifer accepted a 25-hour-a-week position at a local rehab center and every month, she had to dip into her savings to make ends meet. But by last Christmas, Jennifer's future was bleak – her savings were gone and the friends she had called upon to assist were no longer able to help since they were in the same situation she was in. Jennifer contacted her former employer to see if she would be able to transfer to another call center so that she would be able to support herself with full-time income and health benefits. She completed a phone interview with the Bismarck office and she was immediately hired and was her training would begin in two weeks!

Jennifer was excited to start over and be back on her feet – but without any savings for a rental deposit and not knowing anyone in Bismarck, she had no idea how she could afford to get here, let

alone where she would stay until she had at least her first paycheck from her new job. Her church generously donated a bus ticket to get her to Bismarck – and facing the unknown; she had called and made arrangements with Ruth Meiers before arriving in town. Upon her arrival, Jennifer says, she was immediately assisted by caring staff that helped her bring all of her belongings in through the icy snow and gave her a room in our women's shelter.

As a shelter resident, Jennifer was able to have her medical problems attended to and even had her diabetic medication paid for, which she had been unable to afford. With her medical conditions, she was eligible for transportation assistance through Transit, where she can go anywhere in town for just \$2. After living in our women's shelter just two months, Jennifer is now in her own apartment and doing fantastic! She enjoys her full-time job and has made many new friends in the community. Jennifer told us that having a safe place to live, hot meals to eat, and support from the staff and other residents made all the difference for her. Jennifer stays in touch and stops in to say hello regularly; she calls Ruth Meiers Hospitality House her “shining star” that helped her help herself.



*A new beginning!*

We feel very honored to have been not only a part of Joe's, Iris and her children, and Jennifer's life, but also the lives of hundreds of other people we have helped throughout the year.

Will you consider a generous gift that will help us to brighten lives? We pledge to work with you to provide food and shelter to our less fortunate friends and neighbors in our community.

With thankfulness in your generosity and wishing you a blessed Holiday Season,

*Susan Martin, Executive Director*

*Kelly Gunsch, Development Director*

Please accept my/our partnership in saving the lives of the people you serve, giving them hope and a future.

\$5,000\_\_\_\_, \$4,500\_\_\_\_, \$4,000\_\_\_\_, \$3,500\_\_\_\_, \$3,000\_\_\_\_, \$2,500\_\_\_\_, \$2,000\_\_\_\_, \$1,500\_\_\_\_,  
\$1,250\_\_\_\_, \$1,000\_\_\_\_, \$750\_\_\_\_, \$500\_\_\_\_, \$400\_\_\_\_, \$300\_\_\_\_, \$200\_\_\_\_, \$100\_\_\_\_, Other\_\_\_\_.

If you choose to donate on-line, please visit our website [www.rmhh.org](http://www.rmhh.org). Our website is secure and your personal information will be safe. Thank you, together, we can help men, women, and children find a new beginning.