



every heart needs a home

An Equal Opportunity Program

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A United Way Agency

Homeless Numbers Are Up In Our Community

By Susan Martin, Executive Director



I recently attended a strategic planning workshop. One of the questions we were asked to think about is "what would happen if your agency was not in the community?" Since then I have really thought about what it would be like if Ruth Meiers Hospitality House was not here to serve the homeless and low-income people in Bismarck/Mandan and the surrounding communities.

Statistics from the January 27, 2010 point-in-time survey indicate that the Bismarck-Mandan region has surpassed Fargo's homelessness count. In fact, we now have the highest number of homeless people in the state of North Dakota at 378 - up 102 from 2009 when we had 276 people. On any given night there are 1,126 people who are homeless in the State of North Dakota.

A portion of this increase is due to the much-deserved attention that our state has been receiving. The media gives the impression that there is an abundance of employment available in North Dakota, which leads people to come here seeking jobs that may not be available in their state. People are coming in anticipation of work, and once they arrive they find that they lack the experience and skills to

qualify for available employment. Many of them have no resources left to get them back home.

So, what would happen if Ruth Meiers Hospitality House was not in the community? Well...homelessness would definitely be more visible. Imagine 95 people on any given day that would have no place to stay that night. (95 is the number of individuals that are housed each night within all of the Ruth Meiers housing programs) Where would these 95 people sleep?

Imagine those 95 people as silhouettes - male or female and ranging in ages from elderly to newborns. Now place these silhouettes where you think they would spend the night. You may have put them outdoors, in doorways of businesses, in garages or vacant buildings, in hospital waiting rooms, in truck stops and 24-hour restaurants. Definitely more visible and cause for more disturbances. How many calls do you think the local law enforcement would receive from homeowners and businesses because now the homeless can be seen?

Although these higher numbers of homeless individuals may seem daunting, and the stress can be felt on our staff and budget, we want to assure you that Ruth Meiers Hospitality House is not going anywhere. We will continue to serve those that are homeless and low-income in the Bismarck - Mandan community.

We are so pleased to be part of this generous and giving community. In April of this year Ruth Meiers Hospitality House entered its 23rd year with our mission of providing housing and supportive service to assist homeless and low-income people in achieving self-sufficiency. With your generous support, and by working together, we can face the many challenges today's world is handing us.

RDO Employees Build Furniture for Our Shelter



We are so grateful for Lon Kindseth and his RDO Equipment team for their hard work to spruce up bedrooms in our men's shelter this spring.

Lonnie and Dianna Kindseth not only purchased five new dressers for our men's emergency shelter, but Lonnie's team of RDO staff took time to assemble and deliver this brand-new furniture to our shelter on March 18th! Their generosity is greatly appreciated by our staff and shelter guests alike....

Thank you - Together, we make a difference!

Exceptional In-kind Donation to Ruth Meiers Hospitality House

Gruebele's Lawn Care
Residential & Commercial Lawn Mowing
Power Raking • Spring & Fall Cleanup
Sidewalk Edging • Free Estimates

Kathy C. Gruebele
gruebeleslawncare@hotmail.com  (701) 223-9333
(701) 527-3354

Let us work hard, so you don't have to!

We would like to say a special thank you to Gruebele's Lawn Care for their generous contribution of lawn care services to all three of our properties this summer!

We are very thankful for their gift of time and services to maintain the lawns at our men's emergency shelter, women and children's emergency shelter and our HORIZONS building. Together, we make a difference to the men, women and children in need...**THANK YOU!**

Welcome to the RMHH Family!



Ruth Meiers Hospitality House is proud to announce a new addition to our family! Triton John Walker was born on March 19, 2010 - weighing in at 6 pounds, 12 ounces. Triton's mommy is our Assistant Director, Lori Johnson-Walker, who has worked with Ruth Meiers for 10 years. The adorable photo of this little Steelers fan includes Lori, Triton, and proud daddy and Steelers fan, Bill Walker.

Family faces are magic mirrors. Looking at people who belong to us, we see the past, present, and future.

~Gail Lumet Buckley

Ruth Meiers Volunteers are "Groovy!"



The Ruth Meiers Volunteer Banquet was "Groovy"! We are so lucky to have such wonderful and caring volunteers to help us fulfill our mission of "providing housing and supportive services to assist homeless and low-income people in achieving self sufficiency.

This year's theme was the 60's and 70's. We had a soup and salad bar, with pies and cakes for dessert. Our entertainment was a trivia contest with questions like: "what was Alice's last name on the Brady

Bunch", and "what was the real name of the Skipper on Gilligan's Island"? Congratulations to the winning table!

Our 2009 Volunteer of the year is Duane Bentz with the Optimist Club!

As well as working in the Soup Kitchen, Duane organizes a group from his church to clean our dining room chairs. He is always ready with a friendly word and smile and always agrees when Sue asks him to appear in the paper or on the news.

The staff of Ruth Meiers would like to thank these wonderful sponsors who made this possible. Their generous donations for our silent auction brought in close to \$600 to benefit the Stone Soup Kitchen.

Becky Aadnes, Box Office Video, Dakota Awards, Dakota Zoo, Grand Theaters, Lola & Clair Huwe, InJoy BodyTalk, JoyUs BodyTalk, Photography by Scott Berge, Phyne Photography & Framing, Pirogue Grill, Prairie Knights Casino & Lodge, Ramada Limited Suites, Red Carpet Carwash, Texas Roadhouse, The Bead Chicks, Linda & Doug Wurtz, Ruth Wurtz, Area Quilters. THANK YOU!



Life becomes harder for us when we live for others, but it also becomes richer and happier.

~Albert Schweitzer

The 2010 Parade of Ponds



Schneider's Flowerama is hosting their 9th Annual Parade of Ponds to benefit the hungry and homeless in our community served by Ruth Meiers Hospitality House!

When: Sunday, July 18th

Time: 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Tickets are \$10.00 per person for adults; children 12 & under are free. Tickets are available July 12th -17th at Schneider's, 210 N 16th Street. On day of the event, Sunday, July 18th tickets may also be purchased at 625 N 20th Street, Bismarck, one of the pond locations.

For more information, please call Roslyn at Schneider's Flowerama, (701) 258-8418

Scott's Unplanned Journey from Near Death to Recovery

As told to Kelly Gunsch, Director of Development



It is often difficult to understand how quickly someone can become homeless.... in an instant your neighbor, your coworker - anyone can become homeless.

Homelessness can happen from a wide variety of reasons: losing a job, going through a painful and costly separation, enduring serious medical problems, battling an addiction or the onset of mental illness ... typical issues that can easily affect any family without regards to gender, race, religion or financial stability or wealth. Nearly everyone in

today's society has been affected in some way by alcoholism... family, friends, neighbors, coworkers. In the same way, homelessness does not discriminate.

In every way, Scott is a genuine normal guy in his early forties - a hard working construction worker, a divorced dad, a veteran who served 10 years in the Navy and proudly represented our country in Desert Storm. Like many of you, Scott donated to our food drives and drove by our Ruth Meiers men's shelter from time to time, thinking to himself that those homeless guys sitting outside should get their act together and not be so lazy. But after having his world turned upside down, Scott told me "I now see how a person becomes homeless. The next day the job has finished or you're fired, you have no income and no place to live."

Scott was born and raised in North Dakota and although he lived in San Diego, CA during his navy career, he anxiously moved back home to ND with his wife upon completion of his military service. He began working in construction and enjoyed life as a family man - the proud father of a son and daughter. Soon his casual drinking with friends contributed to problems at home, but he was able to keep his alcohol use separate from his work for a long time and it didn't interfere. After awhile, he became disinterested in family, holiday gatherings, etc. and became focused on isolating himself and sneaking drinks whenever he could get the chance to be alone. He worked hard every day... and drank hard every night. It was about a year and a half later when it caught up to him.

When his marriage of 13 years ended, Scott rented a home with a few roommates - everyone in the house had different work schedules. Scott felt even more isolated and stuck working on a job project that was very stressful. When his job wrapped up, he waited for something to happen. He drank hard in order to cope... vodka...straight vodka...and he did not focus on eating right or taking care of himself.

Shortly after the Thanksgiving holiday, Scott woke up in the intensive care unit of the hospital, having nearly died from a deadly interaction of alcohol and a prescription medication. Without a job and unable to pay his share of

the rent, his roommates asked Scott's parents to pack his things so they could rent his room to someone else. Scott's family made a difficult choice as well and his dad stressed to him that he was on his own due to the choices he made.

With no job, no place with friends or family to stay, Scott was discharged from the hospital and came to stay at Ruth Meiers Hospitality House. He had lost over 32 pounds and arrived here unshaven, scared, pale and weak....he did not want anyone to know he was staying in a homeless shelter. Gradually, Scott regained his strength by remaining sober, eating better, doing his shelter chores and helping out with extra duties in the shelter whenever possible. It took him three months to get back to his normal weight and be healthy enough to work again. He walked over to Labor Ready every morning to find work, which led Scott to finding his new career passion -landscaping. Scott credits his sobriety to our shelter program that made him take responsibility for his actions, "I had to do chores, look for work and pay rent; it was not a free ride. This is a great program to help those who want to help themselves." Scott is quick to point out that he could not have done this on his own - and asked me to recognize the efforts of our dedicated program staff who have helped him stay positive and remain focused on his future....Wally is our addiction and mental health professional who helped Scott through his darkest days. He never wants to forget about what it was like to leave the hospital and come here to the Ruth Meiers shelter. Through the optimism and support from both Llyod and Rhonda., Residential Aides working in our emergency shelter, Scott was able to stay focused and succeed in finding permanent employment. He also asked that we thank Bob, a resident in the shelter who befriended him and offered both friendship and support.

This last week of May, Scott was able to move out of the men's emergency shelter at Ruth Meiers to New Beginnings, our transitional housing for single males. In the New Beginnings housing, Scott now has his own space and freedom from a crowded shelter bedroom shared with strangers. He tells me "New Beginnings is the best thing that ever happened to me. I have been sober now for six and a half months and I haven't felt this good since I was in the navy." Scott is mending fences with his family and even turned down an offer from his previous roommates to move back into their home. He is happy and self-sufficient in his New Beginnings apartment - and looking forward to a visit with his two children this July. He hasn't seen them in five years, but his eyes beamed with pride as he told me his son is now 17 and is a straight-A student...and that his 14-year old daughter will be in a national dance competition televised on ESPN. He will get to see her perform on national television shortly before he gets to see them in person!

As I visited with Scott, I was reminded of my own family's struggle with alcoholism - although his journey was not exactly what he had planned, he is now stronger, healthier and ready to tackle life one day at a time, sober. With the ongoing support of his family, friends, and staff of Ruth Meiers, he is no longer isolated and alone. Scott's new career in landscaping represents his creative side - and helps to show just how far he's come in 6 short months. Your generous support is greatly appreciated by Scott and many others; your gift helps to provide the inspiration needed to change their lives. Thank you.

***Your Gift is Needed Now* - Together, We Make a Difference to Our Neighbors In Need of Food, Shelter and Hope.**

Please Include Us in Your Charitable Giving!

Your financial gift to Ruth Meiers Hospitality House means the hungry will be fed, the homeless will have a place to live, and those at-risk of becoming homeless will receive the assistance they need to remain in their homes and get back on their feet. In 2009, Ruth Meiers Hospitality House provided 12,312 nights of shelter to our homeless neighbors - an increase of over 1,685 nights of lodging to an additional 118 homeless people compared to 2008.

Make your contribution today so that Ruth Meiers Hospitality House may continue to offer our valuable programs and to make a difference to those individuals and families who simply need a place to rest, food to eat, and a pathway to independence.



Your tax-deductible gift changes lives and creates brighter futures for the many less-fortunate in our community.

Please consider a gift of: \$5,000 _____, \$3,000 _____, \$2,000 _____, \$1,000 _____, \$500 _____, \$400 _____, \$300 _____, \$200 _____, \$100 _____, Other \$ _____.

Your tax-deductible donation may be made in a number of easy methods:

- Simply mail your gift in the enclosed envelope
- Go online to www.rmhh.org to make your gift by credit card (Mastercard and Visa)
- Stop by our shelter & office at 1800 E Broadway Avenue to deliver your gift in person or make a credit card gift
- Your employer may offer payroll deduction or a matched donation for your charitable giving, please ask!

We gratefully accept memorials and bequests to honor your loved ones.

Please remember us in your will or estate planning. There are a number of tax advantages available for setting aside a portion of your estate to benefit your favorite non-profit helping agencies.

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