



every heart needs a home

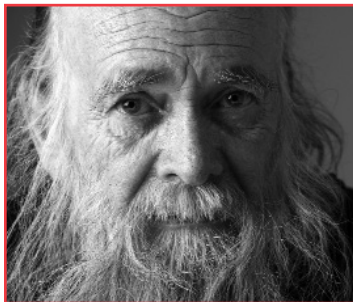
An Equal Opportunity Program

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A United Way Agency

Changing Lives, One Heart at a Time

By Kelly Gunsch, Director of Development.



"Every Heart Needs a Home"...as a Ruth Meiers Hospitality House donor, volunteer, community partner and supporter, you have seen those words many times in our newsletters, annual reports and media publications. These words are incorporated into our logo...and explain quite simply our mission and purpose.

The story we are about to share is not just about these five words. There aren't any helpless, innocent children or pets affected...no extraordinary "warm fuzzies" to tug at your heartstrings and compel you to take immediate action. And yet, Willie's* story has affected many of us here at Ruth Meiers more profoundly than we can possibly express.

After a lifetime of homelessness, Willie's heart has finally found a home. It was so humbling to sit down and visit with Willie the day before he moved into his apartment - the very first home he ever had since moving out of his family home in Tennessee decades ago.

Growing up on a farm in Tennessee, Willie's unusual upbringing could easily be portrayed in a television series spin-off of "The Dukes of Hazzard." His uncle Martin was the preacher in his hometown and his father was a farmer who also "ran moonshine" as a bootlegger when Willie was a youngster.

Free-spirited and independent, he tells me his family was very good to him and that he enjoyed growing up on a farm - driving tractors, going to his uncle's church and learning to play guitar to help with the ministry.

After finishing high school, he began a traveling job hauling asphalt and gravel. Willie stayed in touch with his family as traveling from one job site to the next throughout the whole country became a way of life.

With his friendly, comforting southern drawl you would never guess how lonely his life on the road has been. Willie expresses his love of traveling by Greyhound Bus the way most of us fondly remember our first car.

He shared with me about his days as a gypsy welder, traveling for a subcontract company and moving from one shipyard to the next. His team would be hired to finish up the job and when their work was done, they would move on to the next shipyard all over the country - from Alabama to New Orleans to Philadelphia.

Although he remained close with his sisters and parents, he never really stayed in one place long enough to "settle down" or start a family of his own.

(* Willie's name has been changed to protect his privacy)
Willie's story continues inside....

New Coordinator for Single Point of Entry



As the new coordinator for the Single Point of Entry program (SPE) at Ruth Meiers Hospitality House, I want to introduce myself and our program.

My name is Shanna Urban. I graduated from North Dakota State University with a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice and a minor in Psychology. I have been married for a little over two years and my husband is the General Manager of the new La Quinta hotel that is being built in Bismarck.

The Single Point of Entry program was established in August of 2008, in an effort

to most effectively use the resources our community has to offer to assist individuals or families who may be homeless or of low income.

Resources include: assistance from local agencies, for bus tickets, hotel vouchers, help with past due utility bills, deposits for apartments, and emergency shelter.

During my short time here in Single Point of Entry, I have received several phone calls and have had a few people visit me requesting my help for a variety of different issues.

It is very rewarding to be able to assist someone who is about to get evicted from their home due to being unable to pay their rent or help someone obtain a place to stay or receive a hot meal. Offering this type of assistance is what the Single Point of Entry program is all about.

Should you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at 222-2108 or stop by my office at 1800 E Broadway Ave, Bismarck.

Changing Lives, One Heart at a Time... "continued"

(Willie's Story Continued from front page...) As we talked, Willie's melancholy expression was heart-wrenching as he told me he's lived a hard life...on both sides of the tracks. He has lived on skid row and got himself back on track to making good money at a trucking job, once again traveling all over until his health began to fail.

After years of exposure to welding fumes, cigarettes and not taking care of himself, Willie became very ill and could not work. He was diagnosed with emphysema and was told by his doctor that he would be able to breathe much better if he moved away from the heat and humidity.

Willie looked back on his travels and remembered really liking the Dakotas. He told me "I have always loved this area; it has good people and a better elevation that will help my breathing problems."

Willie purchased a Greyhound Bus ticket to North Dakota and arrived here at our men's emergency shelter the first week of May. He shared with me that he wants to be a "city boy" and is tired of being a hermit. As we chat, he reminds of a gray-haired, frail looking "Willie Nelson" who loves to visit and share his vast life experiences to anyone who has a moment to listen. He is a history buff who loves to read, watch old movies, cook up his own "vittles" and play country music on his guitar.

For about three months, Willie lived in our emergency shelter and he says his breathing has been much better in the North Dakota weather. His smile is radiant as he tells me in his southern accent how he is "blessed beyond measure" by everything he has received here at our shelter.

With his lifetime of homelessness qualifying him as "chronically homeless," our Ruth Meiers team sprang into action to get Willie into our Supportive Housing Program.

Sustained by a Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant, this program provides rent assistance and ongoing supportive services to help people obtain and remain in permanent housing.

Willie had tears in his eyes when he told me about his apartment in Mandan. He plans to take the CAT bus to Bismarck every couple of days "to get some provisions here at Ruth Meiers and to help with cleaning up the soup kitchen after lunch." He wants to volunteer for us here at the shelter and to help out wherever we need him.

Entering our Supportive Housing Program is a tremendous accomplishment for Willie... a man living on a shoestring budget...who could not survive without his breathing machine and inhalers. He will have ongoing support - plus the encouragement and motivation to stay on track and maintain his housing eligibility.

Willie proudly says he plans to stay here in ND for the rest of his life and that he is really looking forward to having his own apartment.

Success in finding a home for Willie and others in need is what we're all about. My visit with this gentle southern soul helped me to realize that, like Willie, I am also "blessed beyond measure" to be a part of our amazing network of staff, volunteers and donors.

Because of your support and partnership, his life is now forever changed. After a lifetime of homelessness, Willie's heart finally has finally found a home.



New Executive Director of the MVCHP



Miranda Albers was recently hired as the Executive Director of the Missouri Valley Coalition for Homeless People (MVCHP). The MVCHP collaborates with local agencies in the Bismarck /Mandan area to ensure housing and other basic needs are provided in an affordable and dignified way.

Its purpose is to advocate, coordinate, and optimize local services for people experiencing long-term homelessness, or those who are at risk of homelessness.

A Bismarck native-Miranda, graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Community Health from Minnesota State University, Moorhead. She's excited to get settled into this position and become a part of what the coalition is doing in our community.

Currently, MVCHP is looking forward to their annual "Project Homeless Connect" event. It will be held September 2, 2010 from 9:00am-2:00pm at the Salvation Army in Bismarck.

Project Homeless Connect is a one-day event that bridges homeless, or at risk, individuals to on-site services with local agencies that can provide direct assistance. Lunch will be served at the event.

If you are interested in volunteering or contributing to the cause, please call Miranda at 222-2108 or email her at mvchp@rmhh.org.

Better Yourself and Better Your Community by Participating in Bismarck's Biggest Loser Competition!



Ruth Meiers has partnered with ND Laser Fat Loss to create a 6 week event where EVERYONE wins! This could easily become our biggest fundraiser of the year and we are excited to invite you to participate.

50% of all entry fees are donated to Ruth Meiers Hospitality House.

100% of all additional donations & pledges go to Ruth Meiers Hospitality House.

There are four exciting ways you can assist in this fundraiser:

1. Become a supporter of the event - There are limited sponsorship spots with fantastic PR benefits, including having a team named after you or your business, placement on all print media and free lipo laser sessions based on your sponsorship level.

2. Support the individual teams - If you want to help contribute on a smaller level, you can pledge an amount based on inches lost or just a dollar amount. There will be 4 RMHH employees participating in the event.

3. Receive the LipoLaser sessions yourself - If you sign up for sessions, in private (not as a contestant) and mention Ruth Meiers Hospitality House-Ruth Meiers will receive 25% of your investment as a donation and you will receive a 25% discount.

4. Become a contestant - We are looking for 10 more contestants willing to put it all on the line. Competition begins August 30th.

Visit www.ndlaserfatloss.com or www.BismarcksBiggestLoser.com

Or call Dr. Jaime Fettig at 390-9440 for more details.

"Nothing is predestined: The obstacles of your past can become the gateways that lead to new beginnings." ~ Ralph Blum



Great Plains Food Bank Grant Benefits Our Food Pantry

Ruth Meiers Hospitality House is the grateful recipient of a grant from Great Plains Food Bank. The grant funds were used to purchase a brand new (and energy efficient!) upright freezer and a refrigerator! These two new appliances will allow Ruth Meiers to store frozen and perishable food donations so they may be given to the hungry families we serve. Our food pantry distributes over 5,000 pounds of food every month to hungry families in our community, we are pleased to have their partnership and support to feed the hungry.



Your Gift to Us Can Provide:

- * Your gift of \$96 could provide 4 nights of food, shelter and support to a mother and her kids at our women and children's emergency shelter.
- * Your gift of \$30.80 could provide 2 weeks of hot noon meals to someone in our Stone Soup Kitchen.
- * Your gift of \$200 could provide 4 nights of food, shelter and support to a homeless man in our men's emergency shelter.

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.



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

Your tax-deductible gift changes lives and creates brighter futures.

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 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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