



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

Reflecting on the Past Year

- A note from Susan Martin, Executive Director



I was at home a great deal of the last three months of 2010 due to some health problems. This meant that I had time on my hands and was able to do a lot of reflection. What I realized is that life situations can happen quickly - and the small things that we stress about every day are not what really matters.

I am fortunate to have employment with sick leave benefits and health insurance. I am fortunate to have family members that could move in with me for those three months to care for me. When I was

told that some of the medical treatment I required to have was NOT available here in Bismarck, I was blessed to have family members that could take a leave from their employment and take me where I needed to go to get treated. *As I reflected about all of this, I thought of those individuals who do not have health insurance and have to make medical decisions based on what they or their family can afford.* I thought of the individual who does not have sick leave and would be without income for those months - of the two parent family that relies on both paychecks to make ends meet. When I had to go out-of-state for care, I wondered about the families with small children and how could the one parent manage to care for the other along with the children?

Had I not had this network of family support and medical insurance where would I be? Like so many of the people that we serve at Ruth Meiers Hospitality House, I could have lost everything. What about our friends and neighbors in our community who are not so fortunate? We must remember that the hurdles that life throws at us are often beyond our control - no matter how hard we work.

The mission at Ruth Meiers is to provide for those in our community who need our help. *We had a very busy year working diligently to meet those needs:*

In 2010, Ruth Meiers Hospitality House provided a total of **13,020** nights of shelter to our homeless neighbors - This was an increase of over 1,608 nights of lodging than in 2009 and 3,293 more nights of shelter than in 2008.

- Males: **348** men stayed in the Men's Emergency Shelter; their average length of stay was 23.4 nights.
- Females: **93** women stayed in the women's emergency shelter; their average length of stay was 30 nights if they were single, but 64.8 nights if they had children with them.
- Children under age 18: **Thirty-eight (38) children** stayed with their mothers in our emergency shelter for over two months before moving into their own home. Our families were smaller in 2010 compared to 2009, but their length of stay doubled from one year to the next, as affordable housing has become more difficult to find. Burleigh and Morton County Housing Authorities have such long lists they have not been accepting new applicants for low-income housing for months.

Homeless, low income and people at risk of becoming homeless in our community were also provided:

- 386 low income mothers received baby supplies and support from our Baby Boutique
- 7,269 hot noon meals were served in our Stone Soup Kitchen
- 1,137 people in need passed through the Single Point of Entry Program
- 18, 649 pounds of food was provided to 486 individuals and families in need through our Food Pantry

At Ruth Meiers Hospitality House it would be easy for us to get bogged down from the bleak things we hear on a daily basis about people who are homeless or are at risk of being homeless. Instead, we choose to give these people hope and encouragement as they move toward achieving what they need to do to get out of the situation they are in. The Board and staff are committed to working as hard as we always have to continue to provide services to the needy in our community. Although the economy has also affected our funding, we stay positive knowing that the generous Ruth Meiers donors will continue to support our programs.

Thank you for everything that you do for Ruth Meiers Hospitality House and for all the support you have given over the years. We are looking forward to a wonderful 2011.

Sincerely,

Susan Martin, Executive Director



St. Mary's Parish Family Pancake & Sausage Breakfast to Benefit the Homeless

Date: Sunday, February 20, 2011 • Time: 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

St. Mary's Parish, 806 E. Broadway Ave, Bismarck (use 8th Street entrance across from Robert's Floral)

Free will donations accepted ~ proceeds from the annual St. Mary's Parish breakfast will benefit Ruth Meiers Hospitality House.

Ruth Meiers Hospitality House Welcomes New Board Member



Daniel W. Raak

Dan is a certified public accountant and the owner of Raak & Associates, a public accounting firm located in Bismarck. Dan's practice opened in January 2010, and focuses on accounting, tax and consulting services for small businesses and their owners. He provides book-keeping and payroll services, business and income tax return preparation, and

other financial advisory services. Some of Dan's previous experience was as the CFO for a non-profit health care organization in Sioux City, IA. While in Sioux City, he also served on the Board and as a member of the executive and finance committees of the YMCA during the building of their new facility.

His wife Danel grew up in Dickinson, and he has three children; Sarah (8), David (6) and Andrew (4). Dan grew up in southwest Minnesota, received his bachelors degree from Southwest Minnesota

State University, and his MBA from the University of South Dakota. His leisure activities include: his kids, motorcycles and trying to improve his golf scores and plans to try pheasant hunting.



Pastor Kurt Chaffee

I have been married to Lisa for 14 years. We have 5 children, Karlee (12), Naomi (11), Evan (9), Emilie (4) and Eli (2). I have been a pastor at New Song church for over 16 years. I enjoyed playing hockey growing up and in college and still do today. I am a chaplain for the Bismarck Bobcats NAHL hockey team.

I also serve on the ND Recovery Council and the ND chapter for Americans For Suicide Prevention. I was born in Crookston, MN and lived there until I was 11. Then moved to Fargo where I spent most of the rest of my life until moving to Bismarck. My family and I enjoy Bismarck and the state of ND.

TC's Journey to an Internship at Ruth Meiers

As told to Kelly Gunsch, Director of Development



Ruth Meiers Hospitality House often helps to educate new men and women into the social services profession by allowing students to volunteer as an intern with us. As an intern they gain insight into the many community needs provided by our shelter programs and supportive services. As we welcome TC to her senior internship at Ruth Meiers, we would like to share a bit of her inspirational journey with you.

TC grew up as a victim of abuse; she married early and after her divorce, moved back to North Dakota when she was just 21. As a single mother with her GED, TC says she moved home to get her life back on track and stayed with her grandparents because they kept her headed in the right direction. She worked several jobs and chose to join the navy reserves because it was a job that allowed her to support her child and her country. Through it all, she endured two to three surgeries every year for a type of recurring cervical cancer. TC tells me "For years I didn't realize that college was even an option for me. But when I turned 26, I figured out that I could go to college and make a difference." She began taking college classes while working and recuperating from surgeries; things were finally going in the right direction. After five long years, TC finally attained her two year degree. She was looking towards a bright future for her and her daughter.

Until January 21, 1994.

That dark winter evening, TC was driving home from Aberdeen, SD. The visibility was poor as the snow blew across the highway. In an instant, her car collided with a train parked across the highway at a junction with no gates or lights. Unbelievably, everyone survived. TC suffered devastating injuries: paralysis on the right side of her body, her neck had been broken in three places along with multiple fractures throughout the rest of her body.

Looking back, she says the accident was definitely an education as well as a painful experience. After nine years of service in the naval reserves, she received an honorable medical discharge. Her military benefits, such as college, were suddenly gone because she was "no longer physically able" to do her job. In an instant, she had gone from a strong, working mother with goals to not being able to care for her own child, much less work to support herself.

TC went through two years of physical therapy and rehabilitation. She is still affected every day by the chronic pain that lingers from her injuries. TC has first-hand knowledge of how quickly homelessness can happen. She has adopted a "pay-it-forward" attitude to help others and has even taken in a homeless family and numerous children. As we conclude our visit, TC told me "Social Work is where I need to be. Maybe I can help someone else NOT go through what I did...maybe I can help them to not give up or lose hope."

TC's goal fits right in with our mission. Ruth Meiers Hospitality House is here to make sure no one in our community loses hope... every person we serve deserves a home of their own and the opportunity to become self-sufficient.

From the ♥ - Second Christmas Challenge to Legacy Families



Ruth Meiers Hospitality House is blessed with the generosity of most of our local parishes, churches, congregations, synagogues, and places of worship. This partnership is a good fit - enabling these neighbors to help their neighbors. While our staff, Board of Directors, and the clients we serve are very thankful for the generosity of our entire community, we would once again like to share the amazing Christmas Challenge results from Legacy United Methodist Church, in Bismarck, ND.

Per Legacy UMC's dedicated and philanthropic pastor, Kermit Culver, here is their story:

Legacy UMC 2009 Christmas Challenge

In the fall of 2009, I challenged the people of Legacy UMC to have "Half a Christmas". My intentions were numerous.

- 1) I sought to create a tool that might help families address some of the per version that Christmas spending has become in our culture and country.
- 2) I sought to help our church experience a miracle.
- 3) I sought to help our church share its resources with a helping agency in our community that was/is primarily engaged in the ministry to which all Churches are called to fulfill.
- 4) I sought to model for other Churches how working together with in the church can significantly increase their faith, and even more significantly assist a helping agency; in our case, the Ruth Meier's Hospitality House.

The plan was unveiled on the first Sunday of November with the question: How much did you and your family spend on Christmas related activities last year? Food, gifts, preparations, travel, etc. were all included. When once they had determined this figure I asked them if they thought spending half that much this year would significantly reduce the quality of their Christmas experiences... About the last week in November I issued the challenge that on Christmas Eve I wanted us to collect a one-time offering of the "other half" of what they would not be spending on Christmas that year, and the goal for that offering would be \$25,000. I arrived at that goal because it was more than any other single offering taken in the history of the church, it would require that we believe God for a miracle because it was substantially above what we normally collected on Christmas Eve (\$2,500) and it would be substantial for the recipient. I reassured them that there were many worthy projects and agencies in town, and they could designate their gifts if they chose; but we as a church would give this offering to RMHH because of their out standing work, and their new emphasis on becoming the "point of entry" for all essential needs within our community.

...in the 2 services Christmas evening in 2009, we collected \$27,500.

The Sundays after the Challenge, I repeatedly asked those who participated if their Christmas Experience was somehow reduced, and each responded "no". I believe that many even had heightened blessing this year.

My purpose in writing this is to challenge other church leaders in Bismarck/Mandan to consider some such project... Our 2009 challenge did not seem to reduce our giving to the budget or our building fund. We paid all our apportionments, and still ended the year with a small surplus. Our folks are not overly wealthy, but did respond as I expected they would. I believe this simple process might be used by God to strengthen our churches and extend our ministries to many essential agencies in our community.

Thanks for prayerfully considering what God might do for your church and our community: -Kermit Culver

*Legacy UMC, 924, N 11th, Bismarck, ND 58501
701-223-4401 legacyumc.org*

Their 2010 Challenge? To exceed last year's Christmas challenge and raise \$28,000 to benefit Ruth Meiers Hospitality House.

On January 16th, 2011, Sue Martin, Executive Director, and Kelly Gunsch, Director of Development, attended both Sunday services at Legacy United Methodist Church to celebrate in their second successful year of this amazing fundraising challenge. Sue and Kelly shared with everyone how their extraordinary efforts would be put to good use at Ruth Meiers. Pastor Kermit shared that they had collected \$32,000 to benefit the homeless and hungry at Ruth Meiers Hospitality House.

Homelessness has no set rules or status requisites - it could happen to any of us. Our friends at Legacy United Methodist Church have shown the spotlight on their community leadership and have stepped up to challenge other parishes and families to do the same. As our partners, the families at Legacy UMC are now part of the solution to solving these ever present social problems. Their generosity has set a wonderful example for their children as well - and has enabled our organization to do so much in this time of financial uncertainty. Together, we are making a difference and we are so grateful for their amazing efforts.



"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

~ Margaret Mead

Your Gift is Needed Now - As a donor, your name is *never* sold by Ruth Meiers or exchanged to businesses or mailing list companies. *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 shelter 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 2010, Ruth Meiers Hospitality House provided 13,020 nights of shelter to our homeless neighbors - an increase of over 1,608 nights of lodging than in 2009 and 3,293 more nights of shelter than in 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 _____, \$1,500 _____, \$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.

Find us on  Facebook

Board of Directors
Steve Balm, President
Shari Doe, Vice-President
Nancy Miller, Treasurer
Bridget Miller, Secretary
Kurt Chaffee, Director
Leo Getroh, Jr., Director
Dr. Jeff Hostetter, Director
Vivian Meiers, Director
Teresa Parry, Director
Daniel Raak, Director
Kim Ressler, Director

701-222-2108

www.rmhh.org

Bismarck, ND 58502
1800 E Broadway * PO Box 2092

"every heart needs a home"



Non-Profit
US-Postage
PAID
Bismarck, ND
58501
Permit No. 66