

# VOLUNTEERS

November 2021 | Willis Dady Homeless Services

## THE HEART BEHIND THE IMPACT





# LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Willis Dady, like most non-profits, relies on the generosity of our volunteers to meet the many different needs of our organization. With the ability to leverage skilled volunteers within our day-to-day operations, we are able to then provide more dedicated time for our case managers to spend working with our clients. The time you all dedicate to Willis Dady is immeasurably valuable work that allows us to continue living our vision of empowering folks to break the cycle of homelessness and become self-sufficient.

I thank you all for your kindness, compassion, and caring of Willis Dady and the work that we do to serve our clients and community. I am amazed and grateful for the dedication you all show to Willis Dady by volunteering your time with us. Without your support, we would not have the opportunity to provide services to the most vulnerable in our community.

On behalf of our staff, board, and clients, I would like to say thank you for your unwavering support and generosity. We truly appreciate that you have joined us in this journey.

*Alicia Faust*

**Alicia Faust,  
Executive Director**



# CONTINUAL VOLUNTEERS







Continual volunteers, those who give their time on a regular basis, are invaluable to us as an agency. They are the backbone of our operations and keep things running efficiently.

There are several different positions that these volunteers fill. They each have their own individual impact on Willis Dady, our clients, and the community at large.

**Interns** are often only with us for a short time but have a big impact. They conduct research, develop content, and learn from case managers. They help us improve our programs while learning how to work with clients and the public.

**Front desk volunteers** greet everyone coming into and calling the shelter. This not only creates a meaningful experience for clients and donors but also allows staff to focus on directly meeting client needs. Volunteers are able to be the first touch someone has with our agency and answer basic questions about our services.

**Overnight volunteers** maintain a safe environment for our clients to sleep in and allow staff to get a full night's rest in their own bed. Clients and staff can have peace of mind that the shelter is in good hands when our volunteers are here.

**Donation room volunteers** keep everything neat and organized so items can be easily found. They make sure items are handed out to clients with respect and dignity.

**Client callback volunteers** reach out to current and former clients to evaluate our programs and client stability. This helps us reflect on our practices and gives us data for our grant applications and reports.

**Renovation and maintenance volunteers** bring their enthusiasm and hard work to our various housing and shelter projects. We wouldn't be able to maintain our current spaces or grow into new ones without them.



# INTERMITTENT VOLUNTEERS







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Intermittent volunteers are those who give their time in less traditional ways. They might not be volunteering on a regular basis or signed up for a shift every week, but they contribute to Willis Dady in very important ways.

**Shopping volunteers** ensure we have the supplies necessary to maintain our operations. They contribute items often overlooked. Without these volunteers we wouldn't have enough toilet paper, paper towels, laundry detergent, or razors to keep up with hygiene needs. We wouldn't even be able to take out the trash without them because we wouldn't have trash bags!

Those who are **on-call donation volunteers** help during our busiest times of the year. They step up when we receive more donations than our continual donation room volunteers can manage. They are also able to pick up donations from those who are homebound or otherwise cannot drop them off themselves.

Our virtual volunteer opportunity for **blog writing** lets those all around the country participate in our mission. They conduct research or projects that can then be used for community education and advocacy. This helps us to translate our work in a way that is easily understood by someone outside of Willis Dady.

**Meal volunteers** keep our clients fed on the weekends and over the holidays when other meal locations are closed. Not all of our clients have access to food stamps, transportation, or the skills necessary to get and prepare their own food. Those who are able to provide meals make sure our clients have full bellies and are ready for the week ahead.

Our **event volunteers** help in all kinds of efforts including fundraisers and community engagement. They assist staff with preparations in addition to helping day-of. They communicate our vision to the public while also raising the necessary funds to keep our programs going.



# VOLUNTEER GROUPS







Volunteer groups are able to have a high impact in a short amount of time.

Volunteer groups most commonly come to us from local colleges, businesses, or religious groups. Some have service requirements they're trying to meet but many are just looking for a way to give back to their community. We see coworkers and friends encouraging those around them to find an agency with a mission to support. We're glad many of them have chosen us!

We're grateful for these partnerships that have led to many completed projects and better spaces for our clients.

The most common projects for volunteer groups are related to renovations. Volunteers might find themselves deep cleaning, painting, installing flooring, or doing yard work. These projects support our clients by readying new properties to be a part of our Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) program. PSH helps people who have repeatedly cycled through homelessness gain stability.

Other volunteer groups might be tasked with organizing our donations. Depending on the time of year or the current state of our donation room, an extra set of hands can make all the difference.

Did you know Willis Dady has the only free, public shower in Cedar Rapids? All clients need to do is meet with a case manager to be added to the schedule. Once they come in for their appointment, we supply them with a shower kit -- which are often put together by volunteer groups!

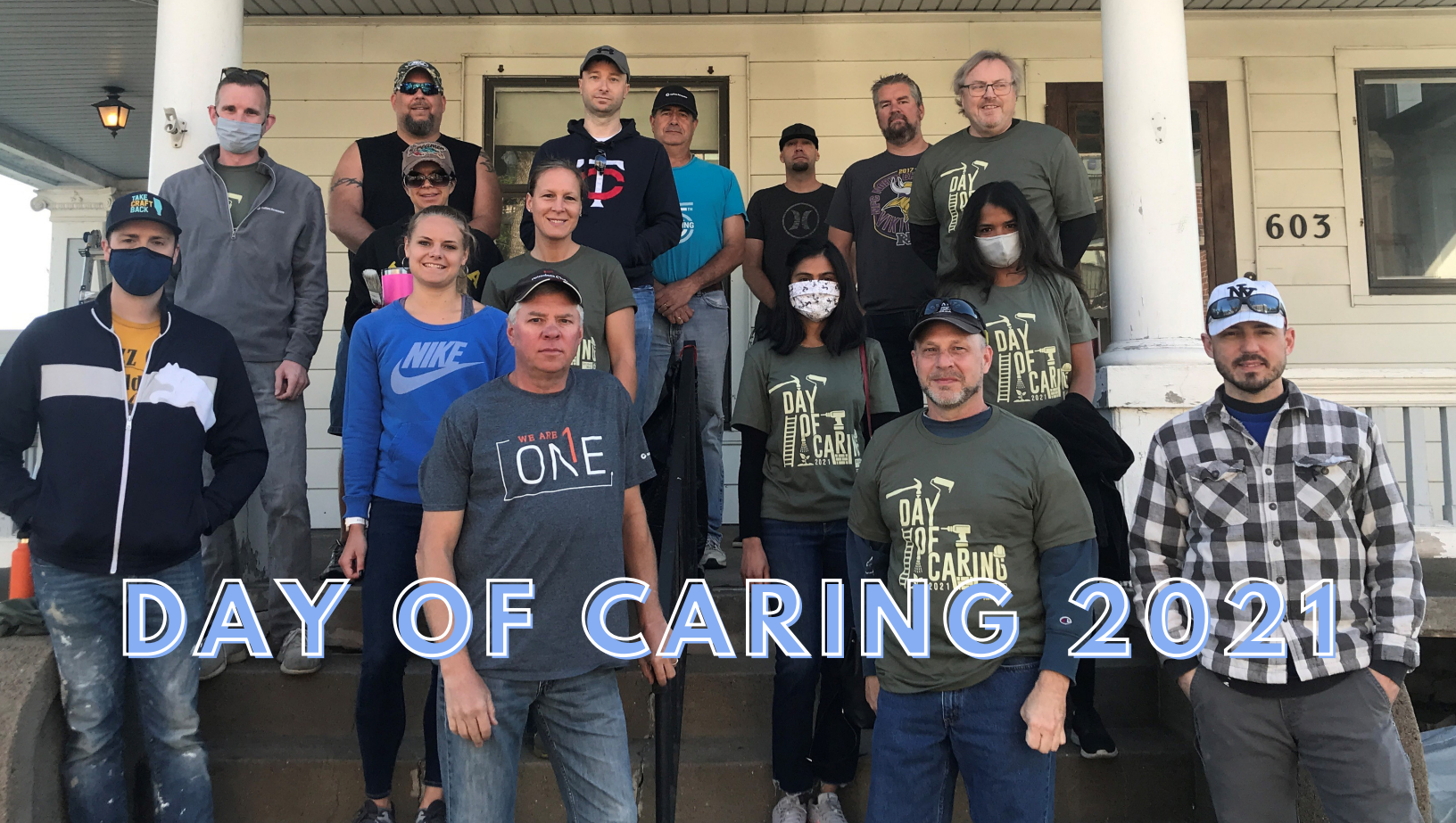
Other groups have done donation drives or fundraisers on our behalf. Donation drives bring in large quantities of things like non-perishable food, toilet paper, and cleaning supplies. Fundraisers help us to pay for things like rent, case management services, and keeping our shelter lights on.



# DAY OF CARING 2021







Each year the United Way hosts an annual Day of Caring throughout the city.

On May 13, we had 20 volunteers from Collins Aerospace at Cedar House. Cedar House is our newest operating Permanent Supportive Housing property, but it wouldn't be that way without volunteers!

In order to be lease-up ready, Cedar House needed some exterior work done. This included scraping away the old paint using lead-safe practices and painting on a fresh coat.

Staff knew this would be a large task that required many helping hands. The Day of Caring offered the perfect opportunity to get it done.

Volunteers were able to completely scrape and repaint the front porch, back porch, and garage.

During the day, employees from United Way and Willis Dady stopped by to check in. The United Way was able to share about all the other exciting projects happening around Cedar Rapids. Willis Dady's Housing Programs Director talked about the importance of supportive housing and the impact volunteers had on the program.

Without volunteers willing to put in the hard work to renovate houses, Willis Dady would not be able to house and support our clients in this way.

The Day of Caring offers a great way for employees to engage in their community. Having the support of their employers, staff members are able to take time off during the work day to volunteer.

In some workplaces, this isn't just a once-a-year occurrence. Some offices offer Volunteer Time Off (VTO) to their employees. Instead of using their normal PTO, employees can use VTO to volunteer at local organizations.

We're thankful for all those who choose to take the time out of their days to volunteer with us. We are grateful for the employers who support their employees' passions.



# THANK YOU!



**WILLIS DADY**  
**HOMELESS SERVICES**  
SUPPORT • STABILITY • OPPORTUNITY