

## Self-Sufficiency through Recycling

Did you know there are many layers to the experiences of homelessness? As homelessness is complex, the solutions required should be innovative, creative, and have a diverse focus. Willis Dady is bringing these creative solutions to our community through Social Enterprises like our Mattress Recycling program, that employs clients like George.

George, who has been with Willis Dady for a year, treks from the other side of the city by bus to work at Willis Dady Works - the employment hub for the organization - to recycle mattresses. He comes every week and is responsible for the bulk of progress made in recycling.



With a set of hand-tools George systematically separates metal springs, wood frames, and fabrics. Approximately 90% of mattress materials can be collected and repurposed to manufacture other goods, and that's the aim of the project. "It makes me feel good to do something for the environment," George said, "It gives me a good sense of wellbeing."

At Willis Dady we feel good about it too. In an economic and social environment where community members experiencing homelessness have rapidly increased, we're creating avenues for clients build futures of self-sufficiency. George is a gracious spirit who has been a dependable part of this project. We hope to duplicate his success with others participating in the program.



The project that George is a part of is a new endeavor for the employment department. Recycling mattresses is not only an innovative way to create employment opportunities, but it is also a valuable public service as it cuts down on environmental pollution. Diverting mattresses from landfills reduces waste while providing jobs for clients.

"I'm here when I say I'm going to be here," says George, "It feels good to have a routine." And having a routine, accountability, learning skills and making an income plays an important role in creating personal building blocks. A combination of these help clients build futures of self-sufficiency.



# Director's Notes from Aaron Amundson

New Years has always been one of the seasons I look forward to most. In the calm after the hustle and bustle of the holiday season we are given a clearly defined moment to reflect on the past year. We often reminisce on major events that happened, what direction our careers went, how our relationships with friends and loved ones has either grown or diminished, our health, our finances, and our happiness. Of course, this tends to bring up feelings of accomplishment as well as feelings of discouragement, and more often than not we focus on what we need to change.

Like many of you Willis Dady has been taking time to reflect. Over the past year we have been evaluating our strengths, our weaknesses, our values, our mission, and most important our vision of what the future should look like. The culmination of this evaluation has produced a strategic plan that will be our guide in the coming years. This will be a step-by-step map to take us from where we are to where we want to be to best serve our clients.

Along with a new strategic plan also comes a new mission and vision statement. We took time to really consider what it is we do and how we best serve our clients. We didn't try to reinvent the wheel, but we were thoughtful of who we are when we're doing our best work. Our new mission statement reads "Willis Dady empowers all experiencing homelessness to build futures of self-sufficiency through advocacy, housing, and employment". We cannot build our client's futures, but we can do everything we can to give them the tools they need to build their own.

Our new vision statement is more ambitious: "A community where everyone has housing, stability, and opportunity". This is the future we want to see, and this is what we are fighting for every day. This is the vision that moves us forward and encourages us to grow.

As we look back on our past and envision our future, we at Willis Dady can't help but be excited for what is to come. We can't wait to strengthen the work we do and see many lives changed. Thank you for going on this journey with us, and Happy New Year!



Aaron Amundson,  
Development  
Director

## Volunteer Spotlight: Holiday Meal Donors

Every year Willis Dady welcomes generous community members to prepare dishes for Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day meals at our Emergency Shelter and the Community Overflow Shelter. This year we had 35 donors prepare 123 dishes for approximately 150 clients between both shelters. Holiday meal donors give their time and energy, as well as their finances to make delicious entrees for our clients to enjoy a homemade meal over the holidays. Thank you so much for your support, and for bringing holiday cheer to individuals and families experiencing homelessness this year!



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

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## Our Mission

Willis Dady empowers all experiencing homelessness to build futures of self-sufficiency through advocacy, housing, and employment.

## Our Vision

A community where everyone has housing, stability, and opportunity.



*We are proud to display the names of those memorialized and honored by our donors from September 2022 -January 4th, 2023*

### **In Honor:**

Howard Zimmon, Bonnie Beardsworth, Arlene Sobel,  
John Locker, Alicia Faust, Jerome and Florence Micka

### **In Memory:**

Francis Cejka Deborah Levin, Dick Brown, Howard Zimmon,  
JP Ranck, Phil Lowder Sr., Dave Hannon, Deborah Levin,  
Ruth E. Karpenske, Sue Ellen Gardner, Carrol and Dorothy  
Amundson, Gary E. Fisher, Daid Halvorson, Travis Hoekstra,  
Claire Sharp, Beverly Wayland, Merle G. Woods

## **Winter is Here: How to Stay Safe & Warm During This Season**

Willis Dady Homeless Services is working with 125+ individuals sleeping insecurely—at the Community Overflow Shelter, in their cars, or outside this winter season. As the temperatures begin to drop overnight, we want to share the winter safety tips our team follows and coaches our clients on. Please share this information with your friends, family, coworkers, and neighbors to keep our community safe.

### **1. Warming Centers**

Warming centers are open either during the day, or through the night, to provide relief from the elements during the winter season. If you are walking, biking, or waiting for a bus-stop, these locations can help keep you warm and safe while you are outside. For Cedar Rapids, check out these locations:

- **Cedar Rapids Public Library (Downtown):** 450 4th Ave SE Cedar Rapids, IA 52401. Open Monday-Thursday 10am-8pm, Friday-Saturday 9am-5pm, and Sunday 1-5pm.
- **Cedar Rapids Public Library (Ladd):** 3750 Williams Blvd SW, Cedar Rapids, IA 52404. Open Monday-Thursday 10am-8pm, Friday-Saturday 9am-5pm, and Sunday 1-5pm.
- **Lindale Mall:** 4444 1st Ave NE, Cedar Rapids, IA 52402. Open 10am-7pm Monday-Saturday and 12-6pm Sunday.
- **Willis Dady Works:** 800 1st Ave NW, Cedar Rapids, IA 52405. 8am-12pm on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Showers are first come, first serve, while the day center is open.
- **Community Overflow Shelter:** 1017 12th Ave SW, Cedar Rapids, IA 52404. Opens at 6pm daily and closes the following morning at 8am.

## **How You Can Help...**

### *Volunteer*



Volunteers with Willis Dady provide essential duties and much-needed program support every day. Interested in learning more? Go to

[www.WillisDady.org/volunteer](http://www.WillisDady.org/volunteer) or email our Volunteer & Operations Coordinator at [Volunteer@WillisDady.org](mailto:Volunteer@WillisDady.org)

### *Donate Items*



We welcome goods donations! Whether they are purchased or gently used, these donations are needed daily. For a complete list of items visit

[www.WillisDady.org/donate](http://www.WillisDady.org/donate), search our Amazon Wishlist, or follow us on Facebook to learn more.

### *Financial Gifts*



We couldn't keep our doors open without your support. **Thank you!** More than a quarter of our annual operating budget is funded by YOU, our incredible Willis Dady family.

Give Securely at [www.WillisDady.org/Donate](http://www.WillisDady.org/Donate) or mail a check to Willis Dady at 1247 4th Ave SE, Cedar Rapids, IA 52403

### **2. Bundle Up, Always.**

Do memories of your parents reminding you to wear your winter hats and gloves on the walk to school ring in your ears? Willis Dady advises anyone who has to spend more than 15 minutes outside during the wintertime to wear the appropriate winter gear for protection from the elements. Frostbite in our climate is dangerous for anyone outside during the wintertime. Wearing warm hats, gloves, scarves, mittens, or earmuffs when you have to be outside is the best way to prevent life-threatening frostbite on your hands, feet, and ears.

### **3. Make an Emergency Kit**

Consider making an emergency kit for your car, backpack, or home in case you are ever without a heat source. Check out our blog on how to build your own kit online at [willisdady.org/blog](http://willisdady.org/blog), or scan the QR code to the right!





*In conjunction with Willis Dady Emergency Shelter*

1247 4th Ave SE  
Cedar Rapids, IA 52403

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# Two Years of Staff Wellness Retreats: Thank you International Paper Foundation!

Based off a grant award from International Paper Foundation's 2020 funding cycle, Willis Dady Homeless Services has hosted 4 wellness retreat days for our staff throughout 2021 and 2022! Due to this funding our staff has been able to have thoughtful instruction on self-care in the social service industry, spend time with our coworkers, do fun activities with one another, and build each other up as we create a wellness-minded staff environment. We are so grateful for the International Paper Foundation's support of our organization, and for believing in the power of employee wellness in reaching our agency's goals. Check out pictures from all of our staff days below--and thanks again International Paper Foundation!

Check out our staff's thoughts on our first and second retreats online at [willisdady.org/blog](https://willisdady.org/blog) (or at the QR codes:

