

## From Shelter to Stability

### Tim and Denise: Making a House a Home

*Each issue of this newsletter features a recent client success story. Generous gifts from donors like you make it possible for these success stories to take place. Thank you so much.*

Tim and Denise began sleeping in a tent in the woods in spring 2016. They left their campsite a year later after someone stole all of their belongings. After a short time in an abandoned garage, they moved to friend's 4 x 9 root cellar. Tim slept on the floor while Denise slept in a makeshift hammock directly above.

Prevention and Outreach Manager Emily Zimmon has been working with them for more than two years. They came to the Overflow Shelter in December. Because of their ongoing history of homelessness, Tim and Denise were perfect candidates for the Wellborn House, where they moved in February.

Health conditions are often ignored during homelessness. Denise desperately needed tooth extractions, but could not have these procedures because she lived in unsanitary conditions.

"How do you get all of your teeth



pulled with no running water to care for yourself post-op?" she said. **Excruciating pain led Denise to pull three of her own teeth and lance two infections!** Infection spread to her jaw and throat, making it impossible to sleep and eat properly. With stable housing for recovery, Denise will have 11 teeth pulled and the infections treated.

Tim also will address long neglected health issues. He lost disability income last year when he missed an appointment with SSA because he did not have an address to receive his appointment letter.

Tim and Denise are beginning to feel at home at Wellborn House. "We slept on the floor for the first few weeks," she said. A donor provided a good quality mattress, the first bed they've slept on in years.

Tim and Denise are rebuilding their lives, but adapting can be a struggle.

"Even after two months, it's hard to settle in and trust people. We are beginning to build that trust at Wellborn House with our roommates. It is no longer a constant worry that we will have to leave soon.

We love this house. It is home for all of us. **We want to do the best we can so more people can have this kind of opportunity with programs like this, we don't want to fail the house or fail ourselves.**"

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Administrative Office: 319-362-7555

## Director's Notes Two Sides of the Same Coin

This winter was full of transitions. Our staff and clients relocated to the new wing in late February (and it is truly AWESOME). We staffed our fourth winter of overflow shelter (Dec. 1 – March 31). Six clients entered our new Welborn House in mid-February. We said goodbye to some staff and welcomed new staff to our team. We made it through three audits in March, survived the Polar Vortex, and hosted our largest fundraiser of the year.

Throughout this somewhat chaotic winter, I saw firsthand how our work impacts people in different ways. Sometimes it seems that people make it through their homelessness and into housing simply because of timing – or sheer luck. This thought is most prevalent when I consider the people we serve at Overflow, and those we are now fortunate to serve at Welborn House.

The Overflow provided a cot and restroom to 460 unique individuals, for more than 6,000 bed-nights. Overflow was a cramped, almost-warm warehouse space where people were cared for. Along with a dozen partner agencies, we provided outreach staff to connect people to longer-term services such health care, substance use counseling, mental health care, and rental housing. Many we served are disabled and receive a monthly social security check. The check isn't enough to maintain housing, and after a week

or two staying in a motel, many of our disabled clients would use Overflow for a couple of weeks each month.

When we closed March 31, we know at least 44 people were back outside, not knowing where they would spend the following night.

In mid-February we opened Welborn House, a 5-BR single family home, to people who struggle with persistent homelessness. All tenants had been homeless for long stretches of time. One tenant had lost parts of his fingers due to frostbite.

Since opening Welborn, one tenant has become employed, one has restarted mental health treatment, and all have identified hope and goals for their future. We are privileged to be a part of their journey, and we are privileged you are a part of our journey, too.

— Phoebe





## Phase One is Complete — Now the Renovation Begins

It's true. We're home! The actual move can best be described as ordered chaos. Most of the real heavy lifting was performed by Woodruff Construction's team, but there was plenty still to be carried by staff, board and volunteers. **Volunteers are too numerous to name one by one, but you know who you are and we love you.** Special thanks to First Lutheran Church for the hearty and delicious lunch. Renovation of the old wing is taking place and we estimate the full project to be complete this summer! To take a peek, contact Lisa Williams at 362-7555.



*Clockwise from upper left: Our new front entrance faces the back alley.*

*A hole cut between the old and new wings allowed us to move furniture and other belongings without going outside. This was greatly appreciated because February was cold and icy!*

*Our brand new Dexter International commercial grade washer and dryer handles heavy bedding.. We were able to wash the laundry from the Overflow Shelter in record time this year.*

*Volunteer Ellen Slessor organized the new donation room. We finally have tidy, matching shelves!*

# Thank You to Our Generous and Caring Donors

We are proud to display the names of those who supported us Jan. 1 to March 31, 2019.

## In Memory Of:

### **Jerry McElmeel**

Steve & Ellen McElmeel

### **Jerome Micka**

Mary M. Franck, Mike Micka, Kevin & Susan Stone, Betty Rolwes, Carol Johnson Sue M. Tietz

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### **Emily Zimmon**

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Please note: Memorials and Honorees listed here were received Jan. 1 to March 31. To correct any errors, please contact Marcy Oates 319-362-7555, [marcy@willisdady.org](mailto:marcy@willisdady.org).

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# Frontier Co-op Partnership Brings Job Opportunities

Employment can be one of the biggest barriers to stability.

We've seen people struggle over the years to identify employment that is not stable and provides a decent wage over the long term. Some of our clients struggle to find jobs because they don't have a good work history, or they don't interview well.

Another barrier is transportation. Lacking their own transportation, our clients may end up working two or more fast-food jobs just because they are within walking distance or on a bus route.

Since September, Willis Dady has been part of an employment pilot project with Frontier Co-op in Norway. In addition to its generous philanthropy locally and around the world, Frontier has a goal to break down barriers to employment.

Willis Dady functions as a supported temporary agency. Frontier informs us when they have open positions. We act as the employer interviewing, hiring, and completing paperwork with qualified individuals.

Our clients quickly begin working as a paid apprentice with a business that provides stable, long-term employment. The goal is to transition these apprentices to permanent employees.

Benefits begin upon permanent employment by Frontier. We have been able to support Frontier by filling the open positions they have so they can continue to run at full capacity.

Transportation is provided by the Catherine McAuley Center, which operates a van back and forth be-

tween Cedar Rapids and Norway.

Our employment supervisor rides out twice a week to speak to each employee and the managers at Frontier. She uses feedback to help the employee succeed at Frontier.

We currently have 16 apprentices and will be filling more positions this month. Since September, seven apprentices have become full-time employees of Frontier.

We are grateful to Frontier for this amazing opportunity to help our clients improve their financial and housing stability.

## Update on Permanent Supportive Housing

Our case management for Crestwood Ridge supportive housing has expanded with one more unit for a total of six households. We are grateful to CommonBond Communities for its ongoing partnership and belief in the supportive housing model. Our first five households have maintained their lease at Crestwood since last fall. All of the households continue to work with our case manager, the property manager, and other support services to work towards their goals.

Tenants at Welborn House continue adjusting to the shared housing

model. They meet with their case manager one on one as well as a group in weekly house meetings. They discuss the challenging transition from homelessness to a collaborative living space. Each tenant has unique needs and goals, so the case management is tailored to that—including applying for SSI/SSDI, gaining employment, and addressing physical and mental health. Welborn House tenants are looking for ways to get more involved in their community and to build their bond as a house. They work together in the yard and hope to have a shared community garden.

Things at Welborn are not perfect. But, our six tenants have more than a warm, safe bed — they now have a home.

We are so thankful to volunteers and donors who made this project a reality through gifts of time, energy, and dollars, and who continue to be involved in many ways.

## Donors, continued

### Organizations

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PayPal Giving Fund, Prairie Bible Church, Rings & Things from Iowa, Rotary Club of Cedar Rapids, St. Isidore Catholic Church, Springville United Methodist Church, St. Jude Church, St. Mark's UMC - Naomi-Esther Circle, St. Pius X Parish, United Fire Group, United Life Insurance, United Way of East Central Iowa, Unity Center of Cedar Rapids, University of Iowa Community Credit Union, Verizon Foundation, Walker United Methodist Church, Woodruff Construction,

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Please note: To correct any errors, please contact Marcy Oates 319-362-7555, [marcy@willisdady.org](mailto:marcy@willisdady.org).

## Street Outreach—Saving Lives

In its first year, Willis Dady's Street Outreach program served 87 households comprised of contained 154 individuals. We expect the numbers to be even higher in the second year. This program relies heavily on the donations and good will of individuals and organizations that allow us to make sure the basic needs of our clients are met.

For years, people living on the streets had to enter a shelter in order to access housing services.

Shelter is not an option for everyone. If mental illness is present, they may not feel safe in a confined area. Others may have been dismissed from shelters due to behavior. Still others, such as unmarried couples without children, choose to remain homeless rather than split up to enter separate shelters for men and women.

Now, though, people living on the streets have access to housing — and shelter if they wish — through our Street Outreach which began in January 2018.

We provide support and case management to individuals and families who are actively sleeping outside, in a vehicle, abandoned building or any other location that is not safe for human

habitation.

The case manager connects clients to services available in Linn County, including access to housing if that is a goal. We carry basic needs such as blankets, water and food. We first make sure they are safe, and our second goal is to help them find stability in housing while working toward other goals.

There were some 460 people in the Community Overflow Weather Shelter System (COWSS). Since the Overflow closed, a great number of these clients are on the streets. Outreach maintains contact with their case managers, stopping them from falling through the cracks and not receiving the services they need.

Thank you to our wonderful donors for making this possible!

The printing of this newsletter  
is a kind donation from:





When you designate a legacy gift to Willis Dady, you are making a difference in the lives of future generations.

We'd be honored to answer any questions. Contact Lisa Williams at 319-362-7555 or [development@willisdady.org](mailto:development@willisdady.org)

## Trash to *Treasure*

We welcome your goods donations!

For a list of current needs visit [willisdady.org/donate#goods](http://willisdady.org/donate#goods) or

[www.facebook.com/WillisDadyHomelessServices/](http://www.facebook.com/WillisDadyHomelessServices/)

Please call before you bring furniture or other large items.

319-362-7555 [marcy@willisdady.org](mailto:marcy@willisdady.org)

## *Join the Team*

### **Front Desk Volunteer Receptionist**

Shifts available: 7 am to 9 pm Mon-Fri

### **Overnight Volunteer**

Shifts available: 10 pm to 6 am, 7 days a week

Call 319-362-7555 or email [volunteer@willisdady.org](mailto:volunteer@willisdady.org)

## **DONATE**

We couldn't keep our doors open without you!

More than a quarter of our annual operating budget is funded by YOU, our generous Willis Dady family.

Thank you!

- Give securely at [willisdady.org/donate](http://willisdady.org/donate).
- Mail a check payable to Willis Dady to 1247 4th Ave SE, Cedar Rapids 52403.
- If your employer matches gifts, this could double or triple your impact. Ask your HR department for information.

## **Here's a Toast**

Thanks to 11 sponsors, 33 breweries and 425+ attendees, we raised \$20,000 to support programs and services.

Special thanks to

Collins Aerospace, Erb's Technology Solutions, UICCU, Woodruff Construction, Cedar Rapids Association of Realtors, The Gazette Gives Back, ImOn, Lamar Advertising, Lynch Ford, Wausau Homes, Luneckas Law

**See you next year on April 4, 2020!**







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