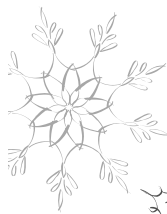


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House of Hope Newsletter



812 Merrimack St, Lowell MA 01854

(978) 458-2870

www.houseofhopelowell.org

Fall/Winter 2023

Dear Friends,

May the HOPE of this season find a HOME in you. This is our desire for you, our friends and supporters, and it is also our wish for the homeless families in our care. You are probably aware that our community is in crisis, owing to the ever increasing numbers of families experiencing homelessness. House of Hope Shelters are full, and have been for a long time. Being full does not relieve us from doing more, as frightened homeless parents often call us asking for guidance and help. We will always do whatever we can to ease the burden for a homeless family. We also offer ongoing support and assistance to any formerly sheltered family who reaches out to us. House of Hope has been in operation since December 24, 1985 and has helped thousands of families over the years.

So much of what we do and achieve is because of the support we receive from our community. Holidays are made brighter, Santa Claus visits, games are played, clothing is made available, transportation is available, job training is provided, and ultimately, permanent housing is accessed. Each of these undertakings is made possible with the help of friends like you. Please stay aware and informed about the current crisis of family homelessness and be a compassionate voice for all homeless children. If you would like to visit our largest family shelter in Lowell, you are welcome. Please feel free to email me at Deborah.Chausse@houseofhopelowell.org and I would be happy to set a date for you to visit after this busy holiday season. Best wishes to you and yours for a happy, healthy and hopeful Holiday Season!

Fondly.

Deb Chausse, Executive Director



"Never Stop Believing"

- News from our Client Services

Jada, a 30 year old single mom, and her son, Emmanuel (10 years old), moved into House of Hope family shelter in August of this year. They did not have much with them in regards to belongings, as Jada was fleeing intimate partner violence with her spouse. They tried to stay with family and when this did not work out, she and her son moved to sleep at a friend's house. They were there for a week before being placed at House of Hope.

When Jada arrived at our shelter she stated to her Case Manager and housing advocate that she wasn't "going to be here long!" While this is a common sentiment of many residents when they first enter shelter, it can be a difficult goal to achieve due to so many factors out of a family's control (outrageous rental prices, credit history concerns, lack of housing in MA, etc.). However, Jada made it happen! She immediately got employment at Amazon and her son enrolled in a new school system. She applied for apartments and any opportunities she became aware of. She was approved for a subsidized project-based unit in the community and signed a lease on November 3, 2023; almost exactly 3 months since she and her son entered shelter.

Jada explained how she overcame being homeless so quickly stating, "First of all, I pray every day." She went on to explain that she would then take her son to school and spend the day looking for different job opportunities and housing options. "Working hard every day, saving money, and with my Case Manager and staff Adriana, Dora, Katelyn, Lisa, Marianne, Miss Diane, and everybody was very fast and helping to get things done." Jada felt the support and the love, "because they love what they do - that's gladly appreciated." Jada and Emmanuel moved into their new apartment. They were able to celebrate Thanksgiving and are looking forward to their first Christmas in their new home!

When asked about any words of wisdom to share with others in a similar situation as hers, Jada stated, "Never stop believing, first of all, in God. Don't forget he is the one who opened the door and closed it for a reason. Keep pushing, keep working hard, keep working together with your case manager, find ways but don't wait."

Time is precious, time is money; the time don't come back." She ended with sharing her blessings for everyone and exclaiming her love for House of Hope. "Thank you for being there for me all the time - in happiness and sadness. Thank you for loving my child. Thank you for your hard work- you guys are truly heroes!"

We wish Jada and Emmanuel the best of luck and the happiest future. We look forward to continue to work with this family as part of our Stabilization Program.



HOH WINTER NEEDS LIST



Baby Wipes
Adult toothpaste
Boxed Tissues
Pancake Mix

Individually wrapped Snacks
Aerosol Disinfectant spray
Muffin, cookie & brownie mixes
Maple syrup

Brooms
Napkins
Bleach
Ladies razors

Paper Towels
Magic erasers
Cake & frosting mixes
Juice boxes

Diapers sizes 3, 4, 5 & 6
Sugar packets/Splenda packets
Full size bottle hair conditioner

Gift Cards for teens and parents to Walmart/Target/Market Basket/CVS/RiteAid/ Barnes & Noble/Dollar Tree/
Five Below/ Dunkin Donuts/ McDonald's/ Gas Stations

For online shoppers, please go to House of Hope's Christmas Amazon Wish List: <https://a.co/5NKi67D>, the Walmart Wish List: <https://www.walmart.com/registry/RR/afc69098-dedf-4af8-9e47-0c241a60bd62>, and the Target Wish List: <https://www.target.com/gift-registry/gift/houseofhope-1>. Please ship gifts directly to the shelter! So we can properly thank all of our generous donors, PLEASE include your name and address as a note on the online orders.



Please email Edna at edna.gustafson@houseofhopelowell.org or call 978-458-2870 for more information. All holiday donations should be shipped to or dropped off at 520 Fletcher St, Lowell, MA 01854.





The 2023 Harvest of Hope Benefit



It was a great Celebration of New Beginnings at the Dragonfly Café. We said goodbye to outgoing board members Andrew Boyle and Ellen Cataldo. We are so thankful to have a great community!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OFFICERS: Dan O'Connor, President;
Jeff Bush, Vice President; Brian Stafford, Treasurer; Rachael Garneau, Secretary

DIRECTORS: Beth Ahern, Connie Cogswell, Michael Conway, Ryan Dunn,
Diane Earl, Reja Gamble, Andrew Gilmore, Esq., Daniel Mansur, Esq., Barbara Smith

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Deborah Chausse

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A SPECIAL THANK YOU NOTE

Joanna became homeless when her partner (her children's father) wasn't paying his 1/2 of the rent. She was evicted and living on couches. At that time her oldest son was 3 years old. She had just given birth to her second son in September, so he was only one month old when she first went into shelter in October 2017. Her shelter was in Framingham. Her second son's first two years of life were in shelter. She was miserable when she was not working. As soon as she received a child care voucher, she worked as a Personal Care Aid for 1 1/2 years while in shelter.

Being in shelter was absolutely the lowest point in her life. Joanna said "I guarantee you that 80% of shelter residents think of ending their life when they are in shelter. You think it was your fault." She did plan to kill herself - she went to the train tracks in Worcester to end her life. Something happened when the train went by; she couldn't do it. She returned to the shelter that day and kept going.

The best memory she had in shelter was that her Case Manager made her save and helped to build her credit. Her Case Manager also helped her to believe that she would get housing and that something good would come along. Because she was evicted when she was in Lowell, she was eligible to apply for one of the new House of Hope Housing's Smith Street apartments in 2019. She did everything she needed to do and she got the apartment. She has lived at the Smith apartment for 3 1/2 years. Her HOH Housing Advocate, Stephany, notes that "It was awesome going over to visit their family; there was lots of love with the boys." Joanna says of Stephany, "You gave great advice. You have been such an inspiration and I will always remember how much you helped us."

Joanna met the man who would be her husband, Anthony, after moving into the Smith Street apartments. Anthony has accepted both boys as his own. Joanna says Anthony "believes in her" so he motivated her to achieve more than she thought possible. Joanna and Anthony were married two years later. With his help, she continued to work, and together they cared for the boys while she worked toward her Bachelor's degree full-time. There were many times that she wanted to quit and she said she was "always tired." But she didn't quit and 4 years later she is a college graduate from Purdue University Online.

Joanna has worked with her current employer for 3 years. It is a local Family Shelter program, She started on the overnight shift and worked as a Residential Counselor. Joanna was promoted to Assistant Manager.

Together, Joanna and Anthony had a third child, a boy who is now 15 months old. She is working on her Master's Degree in Psychology and Forensics from Southern NH University. Her goal is to be a Probation Officer.

Joanna's family has now moved into a market rate, 3 BR apartment. She sent HOH a very special thank you note. Her message: "Thank you for taking a chance on a mom who was down on her luck, a mom who was in a shelter and thought her life was over, a mom that tried her hardest to shine a light on a dark situation for her children. House of Hope provided me that chance to be successful, to have a home of my own and be the best mom I could be, and be finally happy. As my time here has come to an end, I felt as if I needed to leave and provide this unit for another family who is experiencing what I did and bring that light into their lives. I hope that they treat their home with the utmost respect and cherish the help they receive through you all."

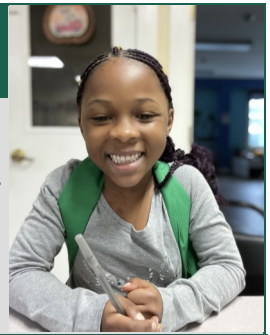
REST IN PEACE

We lost a very special member of the House of Hope Family in August. Robyn Martin, a Community Services Supervisor, was loved by staff and residents alike. She truly made a difference in her time here with her positivity, kindness and giving spirit. Please keep Robyn's family and friends in your prayers.



THANK YOU!

Once again, Analog Devices in Wilmington, made a major Back to School Donation - they brought our children 107 filled backpacks! Analog Devices has supported us since 2004. This is the 10th year they have supplied backpacks!



*One of the real joys of the Holiday Season is the opportunity to say
"Thank You" and to wish you all the very best for the New Year!*

