

Humility of Mary Shelter, Inc.

Emergency shelter for adult men and women

Volume 2
December Issue

INSIDE:

In my own words...

Happy First Birthday, HMSI

Night at the Shelter

Annual Challenge

Special Thanks

Goodsearch.com

From the Co-Directors



1016 West 5th Street | Davenport | Iowa | 52802 | 563-322-8065
www.humilityofmaryshelter.com | hmsiowa@gmail.com

Humility of Mary Shelter, Inc. provides emergency shelter, transitional and permanent supportive housing programs that offer opportunities for men and women experiencing homelessness to become emotionally, mentally and physically more stable.

I arrived at the Humility of Mary Shelter at dusk on a chilly autumn evening wanting nothing more than a reasonably warm place to lay down and sleep. My hike across Davenport that day from the Interstate 80 interchange on the edge of town had seemed to last forever, especially considering the extra weight of the backpack I lugged that held my life's final possessions. When the lights went out that night at 10:30, I was grateful to occupy a thin plastic "mattress" on the shelter floor along with about twenty other men sharing the same accommodations.

The shelter was crowded and a little noisy that first night, but I and two other new arrivals were greeted and reassured by a slightly gruff but obviously kind-hearted gentleman seated at the front desk. He explained the shelter rules and routines as though he had memorized them and admonished us to seek him out if we had any questions or concerns. The man struck me more as a paternal figure fretting over his slightly unruly charges than a shelter supervisor tasked with keeping sixty indigent men in line and out of his hair. This first encounter with a Humility of Mary Shelter staff member instilled not only a sense of relief, but also a feeling of genuine acceptance that went a long way to lift some of the tremendous weight I was feeling at that point in my life.

The events that brought me to the shelter are by no means unique, nor I suspect are they unfamiliar to the shelter staff. I am a fifty year old alcoholic who after several years of sobriety was unable (or perhaps unwilling) to cope with and manage some of life's uglier twists and turns. I started drinking heavily and smoking crack cocaine three months ago, and eventually lost everything to pawn shops and drug dealers. This pattern of events is also very familiar to me. I have been homeless and destitute several times in my life; always as a result of my choice to succumb to the short-term relief alcohol and other drugs offer when nothing else seems to help.

Within 48 hours of my arrival at the shelter I met a staff Service Coordinator, and I quickly understood that I would not be working alone as I started to rebuild my life. This young lady seemed genuinely concerned with and interested in my desire to remain sober, find a job, secure an apartment of my own and eventually return to college to obtain my Bachelor of Arts degree. I was enrolled in my final semester when I started drinking again and would have graduated on December 16, 2009.

During the twenty-one days I have resided at the shelter my Service Coordinator has provided me with a wealth of information, referred me to mental and physical health providers, conducted job searches on my behalf, tipped me off to promising employers, and perhaps most importantly, has been an attentive, responsive and compassionate audience whenever I have approached her with questions or concerns. In fact, all of the shelter staff has consistently treated me with a level of respect and dignity that has been painfully absent in many of my encounters out in the world.

As I write this I am still very tired, but not in the same sense as when I arrived here. At times I do feel frustrated that I have not yet secured a job, especially considering my six-day a week, 8-10 hour routine of riding city buses and walking long distances to fill out job applications. Even so, my efforts have not gone unnoticed by staff members and some of the other men staying here. They have all acknowledged what I am attempting to do and encouraged me to keep on giving it my best efforts.

My experience here keeps evolving; each day presents new challenges that if faced on my own could easily draw me back into the dark place I was living before I got here. I feel no less than fortunate, and indeed very privileged, to be a guest of the Humility of Mary Shelter. Thank you and may God Bless you all.

~In my own words (Humility of Mary Shelter Client)

Happy First Birthday, HMSI!

September 21, 2009 marked the first birthday of Humility of Mary Shelter, Inc.

Celebrating a year of providing shelter for homeless in the Quad Cities are HMSI staff members: *front row from left:* Lisa Devlin, Ashley Velez, Melanie Jones, Christie Adamson and Sandy Walters. *2nd row:* Sr. Nancy Schwieters - CHM, Kathleen Collins, Cindi Gramenz, Staci Hammill, Sr. Mary Ann Vogel - CHM, Julie Williams and Dorothy Spiess. *Back row:* Peggy Quilty, Kelly Thompson-Reyes, Cathy Jordan, Tim Wolfe, Allen Taylor, Jason Bilbrey, Tracy Petersen and Kate King.



Night at the Shelter

is our year round fundraising campaign that was developed to maximize our efforts and to encourage community support.

It is a simple idea that will make a huge impact on the services that we are able to provide our clients.

Here is how it works – currently our shelter has 70 beds

70 beds x \$10 a night = \$700

\$700 = 1 Night at the Shelter

Do it as a family instead of exchanging gifts, invite your co-workers to join you in a Night at the Shelter or lead your group to support 70 beds. In addition, you can pick a date in honor of a special event or in memory of a loved one.

Call Melanie 563/322-8065 for supplies.

McCarthy-Bush Foundation First Responder to Annual Challenge

Humility of Mary Shelter, Inc. came into being because the Quad City Community was very concerned about what would happen to the 70-plus homeless men and women who would be out on the streets when John Lewis Community Services announced they would be closing the doors of the shelter on September 21, 2008. From the very beginning we said we would be willing to do the work, but we would need the collaborative financial support from the Quad City community to operate with balanced budgets year after year. Government grants make up about 73 percent of the budget and we must depend on the community to provide the balance. This year, that difference is \$210,000.

We are developing a strong donor base of individuals and churches and have received over \$65,000 from them since the beginning of our fiscal year in July. We need to know, however, that there are going to be funds available from other sources to keep us going into the future. At the time of our first anniversary we sent out a \$100,000 Annual Challenge in an attempt to get pledges for a period of one to five years from Foundations and other funding agencies to help assure future operations. Recently we received the first response to this challenge from the McCarthy-Bush Foundation. They have pledged \$5,000 per year for the next five years. Our Christmas wish is to have 19 more entities match this pledge.

Thank you to all our donors for supporting us and making a difference in the lives of the many women and men we serve, helping them become emotionally, mentally and physically more stable.



Special thanks to the following organizations for awarding grant funds to HMSI during the past three months: Rock Island Gaming (for supportive services), United Way Capacity Building in Response to Economic Downturn (for job seeking/training assistance, eviction prevention, and essential toiletries), and the Iowa Finance Authority's Public Shelter Services Grant (renovation of bathrooms/showers in the men's and women's shelter, converting existing cubicles to enclosed offices and interview rooms to improve privacy and confidentiality for shelter guests). We truly appreciate your support!



1016 West 5th Street
Davenport, IA 52802

Non-Profit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Permit No. 3200
Davenport, IA



Humility of Mary Shelter, Inc. does not discriminate in the acceptance of participants, employment of personnel, or in any other respect on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, familial status, marital status, age, gender identity, mental or physical disability or handicap, or unfavorable discharge from the military service. HMSI is in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.



Christmas means something different for each of us. We might remember a candle light church service, Christmas carols and the telling of the Christmas story. We think of shopping and decorating the tree, wrapping packages and baking cookies. On Christmas day we have our family traditions – the aunts, uncles and grandparents arriving and shaking off snow, dinner with all the favorites, the squeals of delight as children open their gifts.

Shelter guests may have vastly different memories and experiences of the holidays. Many have no family or little connection with relatives. Some haven't bought or received gifts in recent years, if ever. None have a place to put a tree or bake cookies. Often it is a depressing and even hostile time for people whose thoughts are for getting through today and whose goal is to survive.

Humility of Mary Shelter offers a safe, warm place to stay during times of crisis. The staff gives encouragement and support as guests work on goals that will allow them to meet their basic needs. A counselor and the mental health team help guests through periods of loneliness and issues that contribute to their difficult times. And on Christmas, every man and woman in the homeless shelter will receive a gift bag given by one of our many caring donors. The local meal sites will prepare and serve a special holiday feast. Each guest will know that this community has remembered them.

From the staff and guests of the shelter, we thank you for being part of a caring community and wish you a very Merry Christmas!

Sandra Walters
Co-Director

Julie Williams
Co-Director