

# Samaritan House News

Homeless Shelter For Women and Their Children

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Alice Donahue  
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## Warm'er Wishes

As many know, last Christmas we watched as much of the country was hit with a historic winter cyclone. The storm brought record low temperatures, high winds, snowfall and blizzard like conditions. With these conditions came an increase in homeless shelter populations across the country as many were living in unsafe conditions while others found themselves without heat and no means to pay for a hotel. The storm would last from December 21st through the 26th. As the storm and Christmas approached, the house was in full swing. Groceries were brought in, extra blankets came down from storage, and of course Christmas presents for the little ones prepared. Two dedicated staff members volunteered to 'move in' for the duration as travel became dangerous. Back to back intakes were completed and our population continued to rise. Between intakes, the phones were ringing nonstop - calls came from local hospitals, good Samaritans seeking help for others and one from AEP warning about impending power outages needed for grid stability. By Christmas Eve the calls had nearly stopped, and the hustle and bustle slowed down. Those in the house were enjoying hot chicken noodle soup inside while the storm was now in full force outside. It was about that time the House Manager on duty realized it was starting to feel cold and wondered if maybe our aging boilers were struggling to keep up. That however was not the case. The boilers weren't struggling to keep up, they weren't working at all. The house had lost its heat, on Christmas Eve, during a winter storm, on what would be the coldest day of the year. We would do what we have always done, finding a way to continue to serve. Christmas morning came, the children opened their presents, past residents stopped in, and Christmas dinner was prepared and served, helping to warm the kitchen and dining room. After one cold and silent night, a team of extremely stretched technicians restored one boiler to working order which would be enough to help and to keep the pipes from freezing. The other boiler was damaged during the outages and would require more time and parts to repair. They reminded us that our one boiler was more than many across the community had, and they would be back when they could. Just like it was no secret they needed replaced, it was also no secret what kind of expense it would be for our little shelter. Years of patchwork and prayers had kept our boilers firing up and the building warm as we worked to save enough, but it was now time to say goodbye.

We are so glad to share that after years of hard work, saving, and community support, we will be going into this winter with a new pair of boilers. It may seem a silly thing to be so excited for but this line of work keeps you humble. Heat is not taken for granted. Neither is the tremendous amount of support it takes to keep the Samaritan House operating. In just the last week alone, there have been volunteers working in the yard, organizing storage rooms and preparing birthday gifts for residents celebrating in the coming days, while others brought food and donations. Community partners reached out seeking to find more ways to empower and enrich the lives of those we serve. Churches and groups called to begin planning for this year's Christmas season and to plan supply drives. Memorial gifts continued to come in from those who held Samaritan House, and the hope it brings, close to their hearts - continuing a legacy of giving even after leaving this earth. Amazing. We are so grateful for all of you and your dedication to bring light and a little warmth into the world around you. Merry Christmas!



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"...outside with nowhere to go as the sun was setting and the frigid temperatures for the night were setting in."

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## Success Redefined

By: Nicki Tata

The goal for all of our residents is self-sufficiency. In a perfect world, our residents would come into our program, immediately leap over their barriers, and leave us only to go into permanent housing. The US Department of Housing and Urban Development defines a successful admission as the resident leaving the shelter to go into a home of their own. How do I define success? Did I help someone learn how to connect to services, find a physician, or enroll their children in school? Did I teach someone the importance of employment? How to create a budget or time management? Did I do my best to share tools and education to be successful, if not now, but in the future? I've learned how important it is to meet people where they are and work from there.

My first meeting with Tonya (not her real name) was off to a rough start. She was defensive and argumentative. Tonya challenged our rules, was indifferent to our program, and did not want to discuss her situation with me. I was getting nowhere. I decided the best course of action, was inaction. No more questions or paperwork. I asked Tonya what I could do for her right then. What did she need today? Slowly, Tonya explained that she was exhausted and hadn't had a full night's rest in almost a week. She had no toiletries or undergarments. She was concerned about not knowing the area and not having any bus fare. I quickly called the House Manager and had her get the items Tonya needed. Next, I gave her bus passes and a bus schedule. And then I gave her permission to return to her room for the day to get some adequate rest.

I saw Tonya again two days later. She was rested, relaxed, and cooperative. She began to share her story and we were able to quickly form a plan for employment, transportation, local counseling services and housing. Tonya successfully completed each of those goals in a matter of five weeks. She signed her lease, and will have keys in hand in less than two weeks. Tonya was not a defiant or difficult woman. She was weary when she arrived and had not felt heard or in control of her life in quite some time. She is a reminder to me of how important our mission is to treat our residents with dignity, and how far that can take them.

While I would like nothing more than to see every resident sign a lease and begin life anew in the short time they are with us, that is not always the reality. However, I have learned that we still make a difference in our residents lives in countless ways, and that is what I call success!



## Community Trends

By: Jessica Peterson

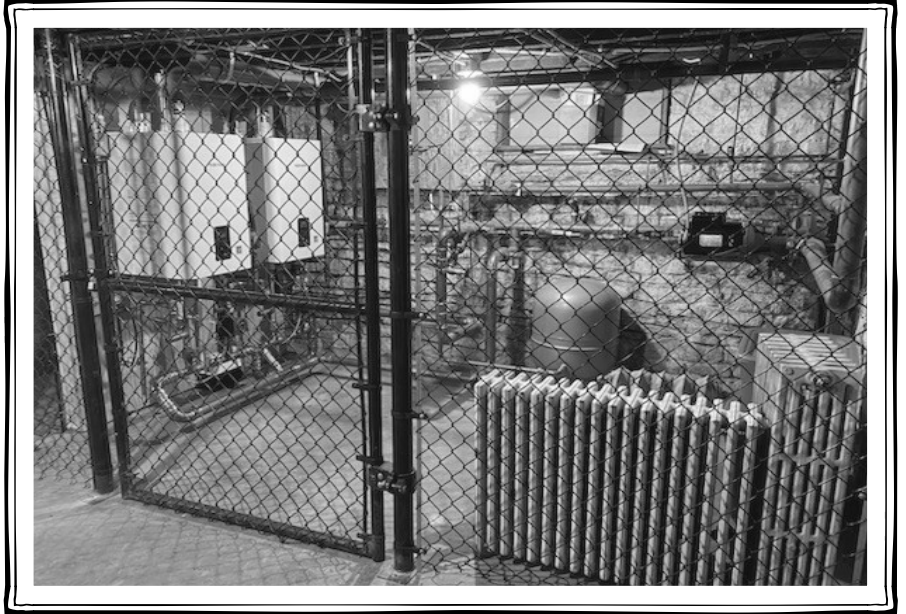
Recently, I sat in on a local area meeting where like-minded agencies and providers came together to discuss local trends and issues that we may be seeing in our community. Unfortunately, these trends typically don't catch me off guard. If one part of the system is seeing an increase in fentanyl within our city, we will see the faces of those experiencing that fall-out at our front door. At this meeting, however, I was caught off guard. When speaking with other agencies, I recognized a pattern that was not just unique to us; an increase in children experiencing homelessness and an increase in the elderly experiencing homelessness. The increase in children had been more noticeable because children have a wonderful way of making their presence known; laughter in the halls, crafts in the dining room, book bags left behind in the offices, and an abundance of questions coming from curious little faces. The presence of our aging population has been much quieter. I reflected over the last year, and in retrospect I was able to see the signs and increase of our aging population and the reasons why. Some of these reasons include the scarcity in housing trickling into senior or assisted living systems and those on fixed incomes trying to keep up with inflation (or those who depend on family who can no longer afford to help). As with many who find themselves with us, bad past choices have also caught up with them. Often, these clients were our less demanding clients. They were knitting in the dining room, cleaning up after themselves, polite, and even being a guide to others. Most the time, we are able to work on a housing plan but we have to get creative.

I reflected on last winter when Betty first called us, she shared a heart-breaking story. She was staying in a hotel after discharging herself from a nursing home. Her plans of staying with someone after leaving the nursing home were cut short when this "friend" kicked her out but also kept her entire SSI check which was demanded up front for rent. It was determined over the phone that Betty needed a higher level of care than we could provide. As we do for those we can't provide for, we gave her the number of resources that could help her and referrals to other agencies with the means and licenses to help someone in her situation. I was surprised when Betty called back days later no longer in a hotel, but outside with nowhere to go as the sun was setting and the frigid temperatures for the night were setting in. When Betty arrived, as previously suspected, we were not a good fit for her due to her higher need of care. While we were not a long term fit, we could be a short term fit, even if only for a day. Betty was with us for less than 24 hours. However, in those 24 hours, staff washed her clothes, assisted her to her room, stood by while she showered, and helped fix her plate to eat. Daily tasks for the day were paused for the time being. Upon returning the next morning, I immediately started advocating for Betty. At first, I was met with resistance but after reaching out to multiple nursing homes, her family doctor, the charge nurse at the emergency room, and Betty's only family who lived miles away, there was now a path. We were able to get her back into housing with the proper care she needed. I worry if in the future we will be enough to meet the needs of this growing population within our building. Just this morning as I wrote this article, there was brainstorming on how to best plug in an oxygen tank. A greater conversation will have to take place across our communities on how we can help elderly be able to age in place with dignity and not find themselves homeless in what should be their golden years.

# Shelter Updates

By: Brandi Schroeder

Just two days after our annual fundraiser, we were presented with an opportunity to reopen and reapply for a grant that had previously assisted us with specific needs through the pandemic. The caveat this time was not only that we would need to go through the application process again, but the work could only fall under the maintenance definition and the entire process and work would need to be completed by September 30th, roughly six weeks from receiving the initial 3pm Friday email. My first response was to crawl under a rock. We were not anywhere close to caught up from the busyness surrounding the fundraiser and coverage issues not to mention how ready we were to *not* be in project mode. Don't get me wrong - we are incredibly grateful for the work that has been able to be completed these past few years. But if any of you have gone through a major renovation while living in the space, you understand. I called our contractor to see what he thought was possible, our accountant to talk



numbers, and I prayed, and prayed some more. It took a lot of work and trust as we were pleading with several contractors to squeeze us in with no guarantee (the grant had to be fully signed off before we could begin), and a lot of coordination with staff and residents as this would be a full scale project. I'm happy to say it all came together. There were lessons we learned from the recent front entry project that helped us avoid taking on more than we could complete and still meet our needs for the space. A grant from The Ar-Hale Family Foundation arrived just in time to allow us to include additional work that involved the same areas. The projects included painting the arch and doors in the toy room, extensive plaster repair on the entire second and third floor common areas/hallways and painting of the walls, trim and wainscoting (which did a great job of brightening the dark space), floor replacement and painting in the handicap bathroom and conference room, along with the installation and purchase of four much needed locking cabinets for supplies in the conference room, which also required moving a radiator. The boiler installations were near completion as these projects began, so a cage was built around them for safety as the basement space also houses a laundry room. There were truly so many moments of encouragement along the way. One of the contractors offered to give us the caging material instead of selling it. Another contractor shared his own experience with homelessness and his joy in now being in a position to help here. I could go on, but in the end, all of this was possible by successfully pairing donated material, private and government funds, and the *many* kind hearts that wanted to see this opportunity through to help those we serve.

TOGETHER WE CAN AND DO MAKE A DIFFERENCE! WILL YOU HELP?

Please find my tax-deductible contribution enclosed for the following donation:

\$25 \_\_\_\_\_ \$50 \_\_\_\_\_ \$100 \_\_\_\_\_ \$250 \_\_\_\_\_ Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

I am requesting a separate receipt for my gift.

Please note any person being recognized for a birthday, memorial, etc., along with their address. A separate acknowledgment will be sent to the recipient excluding the dollar amount.



*The women and children of Lima's Samaritan House thank you!*

Mail to: 328 West McKibben St. Lima, Ohio 45801



Samaritan House  
 328 W. McKibben St.  
 Lima, OH 45801  
 samaritanhousethema.org  
 Address Service Requested

NON-PROFIT  
 US POSTAGE PAID  
 LIMA, OHIO  
 PERMIT # 236



**Mission Statement**

Restoring personal dignity and independence to homeless women and their children by providing shelter, hope and guidance.

**Vision Statement**

Lima's Samaritan House, Inc. will be recognized as the community leader in providing quality service to homeless women and their children with integrity through empowerment, education, financial stability and networking.

*Wish List*

**Grocery Items:** Cheese, Regular Coffee, Coffee Creamer (individual or pourable powder), Coffee Stirrers (available at GFS), Eggs, Milk, Sliced Lunch Meat, Frozen Dinners (individual or family), Fruit/Snack Cups, Ground Beef, Individually Packaged Snacks, Sugar

**Clothing:** Black Non-skid Work Shoes sizes 6-11 (8-8.5 most needed), Steel Toed Shoes-Women's sizes 6,8.5,9, Boys Underwear size 5 and up

**Office Supplies:** Copy Paper, Postage Stamps

**Household Items:** Bleach, Disinfectant Spray, Furniture Polish, LED Light Bulbs, Mops, Paper Towels, Trash Bags (13 Gallon Tall Kitchen or larger), Ziploc Bags (Sandwich, Quart, 1 Gallon, 2 Gallon, 2.5 Gallon)

**Misc:** 10 Pack Bus Passes, Disposable Latex Free Gloves (med & large), Over The Counter Medications - Adults/Kids/Infant (Pain Reliever/Fever Reducer/Allergy Medications/Cough & Cold/Antibiotic-first aid Ointments/Tums), Wal-Mart/Meijer/Save A Lot/Ruler Foods/Aldi/GFS Gift Cards

Please see our website at [samaritanhousethema.org](http://samaritanhousethema.org) for the most up to date wish list.