



# Sacred Heart BEAT

SACRED HEART HOUSE OF DENVER Winter 2023

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## From the Executive Director...

Since March 2020, when COVID-19 turned the world upside down, along with most nonprofit organizations, Sacred Heart House asked, "What now?" The pandemic only exacerbated the plight of single moms with kids and single women experiencing homelessness in Denver. The limited space and configuration of our building, which for 40 years had provided a temporary home for the most vulnerable population in the city, did not allow physical distancing for residents, volunteers, and staff, putting these individuals and the community at risk.

The answer became clear when we considered it has always been the goal of Sacred Heart House of Denver to adapt its provision of services to the changing needs of the women and children it serves and to those of the Denver community! Providing safe shelter and personal support with referrals for stable housing and resources to address issues related to their homelessness were primary concerns. To serve single mothers, their children and single women experiencing homelessness and the Denver community, Sacred Heart House adapted the services of its In-House Stabilization Program by implementing HOUSING THROUGH HOTELS, a program providing safe shelter with case management in hotels.

The following year, Sacred Heart began intentionally engaging with women calling for

assistance, providing critical support and referrals, by phone and in person, to help each of them navigate her personal crisis in real time. Given its mission, it made sense for Sacred Heart House to expand its focus to include helping women stabilize their lives, even when they did not stay in its building.

The adaptation of our services has created flourishing programs with unintended benefits: Sacred Heart House is gaining insight into the needs of the women and children it serves within the community and has used the opportunity to advocate for them. With the ongoing support of foundations and our generous donors, Sacred Heart House is connecting with many more than the six mothers and three single women who would reside in its building at any given time.

In the process, Sacred Heart House has strengthened partnerships through mutual client interactions with House of Hope, Family Promise, Almost Home, Samaritan House, and The Gathering Place. The Follow-Up Program has been expanded to address ongoing food insecurity, homeless prevention with deposit and rental assistance, and provide individual case management with resource navigation for a growing number of participants, who visit daily at the shelter. The progress and achievements of women in the In-House Stabilization and Transitional Housing Programs speak for themselves in this newsletter!

♥ Janet Morris

## From Homelessness to Home...

With emergency shelter provided in HOUSING THROUGH HOTELS and case management support of the In-House Stabilization Program, Lydia, Hannah, and Belinda are among the women who began their journeys from homelessness to home this year. The following are highlights of their progress.

Upon returning to Colorado from Nebraska, Lydia, 49, secured full-time employment with Dollar Tree. Her son, Simon, 9, started fourth grade at Harris Park Elementary School, and her daughter, Jenna, 18, will graduate with her GED from Respect – Compass School in January 2024. Lydia's family settled into their new apartment in November.

After leaving a difficult family situation and ending up on the street with her daughter Samantha, 8, Hannah, 37, confided her need for help with an alcohol addiction: She successfully completed a two-week detox program through West Pines. She is now staying at Gail's Place, a 90-day sober living home, while her mother cares for Samantha.

Hannah is mending relationships with her family and works full-time at a Post Office. She says she is feeling "hopeful, strong, capable, ambitious, and happy" for the first time in a long time!

Belinda, 39, and her family traveled to Colorado from Missouri, in a camper she shared with her two sons, Elias, 11, and Benjamin, 12, and her (then) husband. Upon arriving, she experienced domestic violence, and when the camper was stolen, her husband abandoned the family. Belinda obtained a Colorado ID and began working as a manager at Dollar Tree. Elias and Benjamin attend West Middle School, while their mother begins the search for affordable housing.

## BRAXTON KEY FOUNDATION SUPPORTS TRANSITIONAL HOUSING FAMILIES!

On Saturday, November 25th, families in Sacred Heart of Denver's Transitional Housing Program were introduced to the BRAXTON KEY FOUNDATION and met DENVER NUGGETS FORWARD #11 BRAXTON KEY! It was an unforgettable event.



Braxton Key is keenly aware of the impact a professional athlete can make on kids' lives. As he expressed to journalist Mat Issa in a Forbes

SportsMoney interview, *"You never really know what kids go through on their day-to-day. Who knows, maybe a professional athlete coming in to speak to them changes their entire life. Maybe one or two of those kids hear me and get the confidence they need to be where I'm at someday."*

On that afternoon at Sacred Heart House, the Braxton Key Foundation's team, led by Taylor Lee, showered each family with laundry baskets overflowing with household items.

When everyone gathered in the living room at Sacred Heart House, Braxton's mere presence excited the children, but his words impacted their mothers. It was immediately clear that the warmth and openness with which Braxton shared the challenges he faced pursuing his NBA career inspired confidence in the women, because they shared their own struggles with him!

**Thank you to Braxton Key and his Foundation for sharing their time and resources with the families at Sacred Heart House!**



*Interns in the Bachelor of Social Work (BSSW) and Master of Social Work (MSW) Programs at Metropolitan State University of Denver provide support for women receiving services through the In-House Stabilization and Follow-Up Programs at Sacred Heart House of Denver.*

**WE ARE HONORED TO INTRODUCE BRITTANY CROSSMAN. . .**

My time at Sacred Heart House of Denver has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my career. As a Master of Social Work Student at Metropolitan State University of Denver, I've enjoyed gaining experience in providing case management, learning what resources are available, and what opportunities exist to better advocate for vulnerable clients. Connecting with the women and families in our programs has been heartwarming and inspiring, and I look forward to continuing my work in the spring semester.

When I'm not at Sacred Heart House, I enjoy spending time outdoors. I love to hike, camp, and walk my two dogs, Pepper and Winston. In my downtime, I also love to read or watch a good show on Netflix (*The Crown is my favorite!*).

In the future, I plan to use the skills gained from Sacred Heart House to work in policy or the legislature to advocate for larger, systemic change.



**A Message from the Board Chair...**

Happy Holidays to all of you who supported Sacred Heart House in 2023! We show the women and children we serve that we truly care about them by giving them the opportunity to become self-sufficient with your help. Together, we can create positive change and make a lasting impact.

Thank you for your continued support.

Warm regards,  
**Michel Nelson**

... Case Manager Sheri Ludlam shares insights into the lives of residents in Sacred Heart's Transitional Housing Program.



*Jeannette*, 30, works in the Payroll Department through MSU Denver's Work Study Program, while she completes classes for her degree in Accounting. She was offered and accepted a paid internship with IMA Financial Group, which begins in the spring. Following her graduation in May 2024, she will be considered for employment in the IMA organization! Jeannette's daughter, Mallory, 5, loves her friends at McMeen Elementary School, where she attends kindergarten. Jeannette also concentrates on her mental and physical health, as she heals from the loss of her sister this year.



*Melinda*, 41, will be graduating with an associate degree in Sociology from Aurora Community College in May 2024. She is receiving help through the TANF (Temporary Aid to Needy Families) Program at Denver Human Services, while she waits to be approved for Social Security Disability for serious physical and mental health issues. Melinda's daughters, Annie, 13, and Madelyn, 11, continue to attend Place Bridge Academy. A very engaged parent, Melinda has been a great advocate for her daughters, as they deal with their own new health issues, a conflict with another student, and other concerns affecting teen and pre-teen girls over the last year. Melinda's positive parenting skills support the counseling the girls receive at school. Affirming therapy through Cairn Counseling supports Melinda's efforts to care for her family and gain the budgeting and household management skills to achieve her strong desire to be independent and self-sufficient.



The consistent Social Security income *Paula*, 63, began receiving this year has made it less stressful for her to address physical and mental health issues related to unstable diabetes and serious knee problems. The income also contributes to her eligibility for permanent afford-

able housing. In anticipation of her move from the Transitional Housing Program in the spring, Paula is applying for permanent housing and working on minimizing the belongings she has accumulated to simplify her life.



*Hadley*, 30, was referred to Sacred Heart House by House of Hope, so she can continue studying for her degree in Psychology at the University of Colorado, Denver. We welcomed Hadley and her children, Kendra, 8, and Teddy, 4, into the Transitional Housing Program in October 2023. Hadley anticipates graduating in 2026 and plans to eventually pursue a master's degree in Neuroscience. At the beginning of Hadley's spring semester, Kendra will be transferring to Place Bridge Academy, while the Auraria Early Learning Center on Hadley's campus will provide daycare for Teddy. Hadley is eager to continue therapy to address issues resulting from a long history of abuse she has experienced since childhood and from more recent domestic violence. Hadley has expressed gratitude for the opportunity to focus on her education and mental health, while she and her family have a stable place to live. Deposit assistance from the St. Vincent de Paul Society at Blessed Sacrament Church helped Hadley realize her move.



*Bailey*, 23, and her son, Max, 18 months, began participating in the Transitional Housing Program in November 2023, after receiving emergency shelter through House of Hope. Highly motivated Bailey works full-time as a supervisor at Kriser's Natural Pet, while she is taking courses in an online program through Quickstart to become a network engineer. She anticipates completing all her courses by December 2024. Max attends daycare at Bright Beginnings. Bailey loves being a mother and is excited about the opportunity to focus on school and spend quality time with Max. Denver Rescue Mission's Pathway Program provided deposit assistance to help facilitate Bailey's move.



*Nala*, 58, and Peter, 15, successfully completed their time in the Transitional Housing Program and settled into a permanent apartment with a Denver Housing Authority Project Based Voucher in August 2023. Peter is now a freshman at Abraham Lincoln High School. Nala and Peter have grown individually and in their relationship over the last few years. As African refugees, they have overcome many obstacles in their journey to become self-sufficient in their new country. Nala recently became a United States citizen, and she is helping Peter achieve the same goal.



After thriving in the Transitional Housing Program, *Lucy*, 31, and her children, William, 7, James, 6, and one-year-old Pamela moved into the TownView affordable apartments in April 2023. Lucy continues to work toward completing her bachelor's degree in Business Intelligence at MSU Denver. As an independent single mother who has reached a degree of self-sufficiency that was only a dream two years ago, she is excited to spend time with her children in their new home.



After laying the foundation for future education by obtaining her GED from Aurora Community College and developing critical budgeting skills in the Transitional Housing Program, *Yolanda*, 27, with Ethan, 5, and Lola, 4, moved to Warren Village. She will have continued support, as she takes classes at Emily Griffith Technical College in pursuit of a career in Cosmetology.

***Sacred Heart House of Denver impacted the lives of 1,148 women and children experiencing or recovering from homelessness through its In-House Stabilization, Follow-Up, and Transitional Housing Programs this year!***



## ENDLESS GRATITUDE FOR SIX YEARS OF FOOD!

In 2017, Neil Wiese and his wife, Lana, sat down to consider a new place to make charitable donations. Neil shares, "From our research, we knew Sacred Heart House was doing really good work supporting single moms and their kids." After Neil and Lana each toured Sacred Heart House and learned about its mission, Neil suggested they would like to support the families with regular shipments of food. The rest is history: Over the past six years, women and children served by Sacred Heart House have benefitted from monthly shipments of food worth over \$26,000!

Recently, Neil and Lana made the difficult decision to move to a retirement facility. They regret that they are no longer able continue their food contributions and express the hope that another donor will continue what they started. Our hearts are full of gratitude for Neil and Lana's kindness and generosity and the impact it has made on so many lives!



Since she was five years-old, Lindsey Montgomery has donated to Sacred Heart House! This year, with help from family, friends and her school, she collected winter gear to help keep moms and kids warm all winter!



CBP Officer Alexandria Buggs (2nd from left) and Fellow Officers from U.S. Customs and Border Protection with Sheri and Their Donations of Thanksgiving Food and Hygiene Products



Natalie Schroeder, left, and friend Sarah Schuster delivered a donation of soft, comfy pajamas from Natalie's PJ All Day business in Vail, CO!



Monica and her husband Mike made 50 Art Kits through GIVE KIDS ART for children in Sacred Heart's programs!

## NEW PARTNERSHIP: CAREERDASH AND SACRED HEART HOUSE!



CareerDash is partnering with Sacred Heart House of Denver to provide a free career course and job placement for individuals. Most of the placements are for full-time or part-time remote jobs.

Through its non-profit partner program, CareerDash provides access to a full range of career development programs and resources, including 1-1 coaching, a dedicated student success manager, a lifetime career center and training for in-demand careers. Personalized support helps individuals explore careers and navigate challenges and barriers they might face as they pursue their goals.

To bring career development to underserved communities, CareerDash offers coaches from various backgrounds to help individuals choose a career path tailored to their interests, experience, and personal employment goals. CareerDash specializes in training for Business Development or Recruiting, which have typical starting salaries with incentives in the \$50,000 to \$85,000 range. These careers include upward advancement opportunities and the possibility of crossover careers.

The training consists of an eight-week self-paced course attended remotely from a home computer, which includes meetings with coaches and a success manager. Sacred Heart House is excited and grateful to present this opportunity to women in the Follow-Up and Transitional Housing Programs!

We value the contributions of *all* those who donate goods, including clothing, furniture and household items and services.

- ♥ Parents and students of **ST. ANNE'S ELEMENTARY SCHOOL** and **ALL** the **INDIVIDUALS** and **FAMILIES** who bring food donations to help address the food insecurity of Follow-Up families and single women.
- ♥ **TONY LOPEZ** and **LA POPULAR** for donating tamales and cookies each week.
- ♥ **ADDE'S CATERING KITCHEN** for bringing wonderful meals for Follow-Up and Transitional Housing families.
- ♥ **DOLORES RAEI-TAPIA** and the **LADIES' AUXILIARY OF THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS** for King Soopers gift cards and handmade quilts, blankets, scarves, and gloves.
- ♥ **THE SINGER FAMILY** for their White Elephant donation.
- ♥ **THE TWINNING FAMILY** for so many years of Christmas party donations.
- ♥ **HAZEL** and **JOE PRON, LOU, AVA,** and **LOGAN SINGER** for their helping hands during the year, especially during the holidays!
- ♥ **OUR LADY OF FATIMA** and **MOST PRECIOUS BLOOD PARISHES** for food donations at Easter and Thanksgiving.
- ♥ **ST. JOAN OF ARC CATHOLIC CHURCH** for Thanksgiving turkeys and Christmas food boxes.
- ♥ **MOLLY ENGLS** and her **FAMILY** and **FRIENDS** for providing Thanksgiving food boxes for 120 families and to **MOLLY** and her **FAMILY** for delivering them.
- ♥ **BARB ASTUNO** and **FAMILY** and **FRIENDS** for Thanksgiving food boxes.
- ♥ **KROENKE SPORTS & ENTERTAINMENT** for including Sacred Heart House in their annual day of service.
- ♥ **FIREHOUSE QUILTS OF COLORADO** for handmade quilts.
- ♥ **CHERYL FALBO** and **CHERRY CREEK MED SPA** for SkinMedica Brightening Essentials Kits.
- ♥ **BIANCA RAMOS** from FedEx Ground for hygiene kits from the FedEx drive she organized.
- ♥ **CHANDRA MOSELEY** and **SALON THEORY – WASH PARK** for food, hygiene, and cleaning supplies.
- ♥ **COLORADO ACADEMY'S STUDENTS' H.O.P.E. HOLIDAY EVENT** for the underserved Denver Metro population.
- ♥ **UP WITH PEOPLE** for new blankets.
- ♥ **SPIRIT OF CHRIST, ST. MARY CATHOLIC PARISH LITTLETON** and **OUR LADY OF LOURDES PARISH, ST. FRANCES CABRINI** and **ST. VINCENT de PAUL CHURCHES, WILLOWS CHILD LEARNING CENTERS, SM ENERGY, ST. VINCENT de PAUL SOCIETY,** the **FOUNDATION OF ACCOUNTING & FINANCIAL WOMEN'S ALLIANCE, CHAD MILLER** and **KAISER PERMANENTE CLINICAL PHARMACY SERVICES, ANGELA DELENE** and **GENERAL ELECTRIC RENEWABLE ENERGY, GALLERIA OFFICE TOWERS, SHOTGUN WILLIE'S, PARC** at **CHERRY CREEK, PETER O'NEILL, TORI MORRIS** and **PHI CHAPTER,** the **BOO** and **REED DIXON FAMILY, CLARISSA DRIVAN, JANICE SMITH, MOLLY ENGELS, BAR TACO** in **LoHi, LISA WITT** and **NEIGHBORS, JAMES MUCKER** and **SALON UTOPIA, AARON LOWERY, DDS, GOVERNOR'S PARK DENTAL GROUP** and **FRIENDS,** and **ALL** the **INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES** and **BUSINESSES** for providing items from our Needs List, contributing gifts for hotel guests and adopting families in our Follow-Up Program during this holiday season. (This list includes organizations and businesses who have contacted us as of our printing deadline.)
- ♥ **CATHY LAW** and the **VOA/RSVP TEAM** for keeping in touch with Sacred Heart House and monitoring our volunteer needs.
- ♥ **SUSIE SHANLEY, BARB ASTUNO** and **ASHLEY HOFFMAN** for volunteering to acknowledge those who support Sacred Heart House.
- ♥ **DAVE MCKINLEY** for stuffed animals for children in HOUSING THROUGH HOTELS and Follow-Up Programs and for donations of one-ply toilet paper, coffee, trash bags and paper towels.
- ♥ **WILLIAM COLLIER, DAVE MCKINLEY, MARTHA SUNDBY, JIM McDERMOTT,** and **ALL UNIVERSITY HILLS ROTARIANS,** for their ongoing support, especially at Thanksgiving and Christmas, and for including our Transitional Housing families in their annual Santa Party.
- ♥ **SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT de PAUL** for deposit and rental assistance throughout the year.
- ♥ **EXTENDED STAY AMERICA** and **REED MARTINI** of **HOME-TOWNE STUDIOS** and **SUITES** and **UPTOWN SUITES EXTENDED STAY** in Centennial for supporting our HOUSING THROUGH HOTELS Program.
- ♥ **FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE MEMBERS MICHEL NELSON, ASHLEY HOFFMAN (LEAD), MELISSA GLAWE** and **LYNN SINGER-SANTOMO** and **EACH BOARD MEMBER** for time spent supporting the mission of Sacred Heart House of Denver.
- ♥ **ANN ZIMMER** and **HOLY FAMILY PARISH** for Mother's Day gifts.
- ♥ **DON** and **JANIS MCFALL** and **MARK** and **ANGIE HENDERSON** for their ongoing support.
- ♥ **HOOTERS RESTAURANT** for their annual fundraising event.
- ♥ **LYNN SINGER-SANTOMO** for maintaining our website.
- ♥ **MELISSA GLAWE** for the fundraiser at **OLD BLINKING LIGHT.**
- ♥ **MOLLY ENGLS** for furniture for our Transitional Housing Program.
- ♥ **JEFF STONE** and **PARIS TIRE SERVICE** for donating services for cars of women in our Follow-Up Program and for servicing Sacred Heart's vehicles.
- ♥ **JOSH STRANSKY, COMMUNITY BANK PRESIDENT** and the support of **ANB BANK.**
- ♥ ... **AND THANK YOU to ALL OUR VOLUNTEERS,** especially **MOLLY ENGLS** and **ANDREA BELL,** who keep their thumbs on the pulse of Sacred Heart House and mobilize to help us meet special needs of the women and children we serve.



*Bianca Ramos from FedEx GROUND organized a Hygiene Kits drive.*

*UP WITH PEOPLE donated new blankets.*



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## WAYS TO GIVE. . .

### **ENTERPRISE ZONE CONTRIBUTIONS**

Donations of \$250 or more may be recorded under the Colorado Economic Enterprise Zone. These donations are eligible for a state tax credit, which, in most cases, is 25%. Checks should be made out to Sacred Heart House of Denver with "Enterprise Zone" written in the memo space.

**The State of Colorado requires every agency to collect each taxpayer's Social Security Number.** If Sacred Heart House of Denver does not submit this number on its Enterprise Zone forms, the donation is tax deductible, but it is not eligible for the tax credit.

You will receive a "Certification of Qualified Enterprise Zone Contribution" from the State of Colorado to attach to your 2023 Colorado Income Tax Form. Contributions must be received by December 31, 2023, to be eligible for the tax credit.

### **Pay Pal GIVING FUND**

Pay Pal Giving Fund receives donations on PayPal, GoFundMe, Facebook, Instagram, Twitch, and other platforms, and makes grants to their donors' recommended charities. Your official donation receipt comes from PayPal Giving Fund.

### **coloradogives.org**

Donations may be made at any time through [coloradogives.org](http://coloradogives.org), an online resource featuring Colorado charities made possible by Community First Foundation. Ninety-eight percent of your donation comes directly to Sacred Heart House of Denver. Each December, on Colorado Gives Day, the value of your donation is increased by a \$1,000,000+ Incentive Fund. These donations of \$250 or more may be eligible for the Enterprise Zone Tax Credit.

### **CORPORATE MATCHING GIFTS**

Many employers match gifts made by their employees to non-profit organizations. If you are considering making a donation to Sacred Heart House of Denver, please contact the Human Resources Department of your company to see if it has a Matching Gift Program. If it does, you can obtain a matching gift form and follow its directions to initiate the match. Your contribution may be doubled!



Please visit our web site:  
[www.sacredhearthouse.com](http://www.sacredhearthouse.com)

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*Sacred Heart* BEAT

is published annually by  
**Sacred Heart House of Denver**

Special thanks to:

Jeannette Lee

for its design & production.

Heart mandala by Nicole Tamminga