

# News from the road home

Winter 2013

## 2012 Year in Review

By Kristin Rucinski, Executive Director

The Road Home completed another successful year partnering with the community in our efforts to end homelessness. Together, our volunteers, donors and staff helped 140 families, including 278 children! While we all deserve a pat on the back for our tremendous teamwork, we must also recognize the 307 families who were in need of shelter and had to be put on our waiting list.

In addition, we welcomed Beth Israel and Mt. Zion as buddy congregations for our IHN Shelter Program last year. We purchased two more eight-plex buildings for our Housing & Hope program and will be moving families into these affordable units later this year. We partnered with Dane County and the YWCA Madison to provide affordable housing in Stoughton. These are wonderful accomplishments.

I've also been inspired and reminded that sometimes seemingly simple actions have powerful impacts. Here are a few

of those memories from 2012.

Douglas Stewart Co. donated many learning toys around the holidays, particularly devices to help children learn to read. When one case manager brought a Leapfrog to a five-year-old girl, she repeated, "Oh my gosh! Oh my gosh! Ooh my gosh!" over and over in disbelief and excitement.

A volunteer explained to me that he feels as if he receives much more than he gives every time he volunteers.

I'll never forget a staff member talking about how lucky she felt to be working at The Road Home.

Our board of directors kept the agency on target and following our mission during a transition of executive directors.

Each year at our Families Moving Forward event, we honor the accomplishments and goals families have achieved while in stable housing. This year, the pride and joy in one mom's voice telling me about her son graduating eighth grade was remarkable. Another mom's smile as she showed me a letter

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## Recycled Rides Donates a Truck

The Road Home is thankful to be the recipient of a 2000 Ford Ranger through the Recycled Rides program. This nationwide, non-profit project, organized by the National Auto Body Council, repairs and donates vehicles to families or



Kristin Rucinski and a current client receiving keys to the truck.

organizations in need. The truck was donated by American Family Insurance and refurbished by Gates Auto Body and will be used to help move donated furniture to families in housing.

Families often lose most, if not all, of their belongings while homeless so sometimes move into their new apartment with no furnishings. Parents and children have to wait three to four weeks for a bed to sleep on or a kitchen table to eat dinner together. This is heartbreaking, especially since we often have generous donors wanting to donate their old furniture.

The Ford Ranger will allow us to pick up donated furniture and deliver it to families in need much faster. This was a great example of local businesses and charitable organizations working together.

If you have furniture in good condition you'd like to donate, please contact Juanita Ebert at 294-7998. We are most in need of beds, kitchen table sets and dressers.



The Road Home  
128 E. Olin Ave., Suite 202  
Madison, WI 53713



www.trhome.org  
(608)294-7998



info@trhome.org  
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## 2012 Homes for Families Breakfast

On November 8th, 2012 The Road Home Dane County held our 8th annual Homes for Families Breakfast at the Alliant Energy Center. The event was a huge success with almost 400 people in attendance. The theme for this year's breakfast was, "Everyone has a Dream." Melissa, a current client of The Road Home, opened the event sharing her dreams of having stable housing for her family and going back to school. We also heard from Kristin Rucinski, our Executive Director, and LaTrease, a former participant of the Rapid Rehousing program. LaTrease, along with her one-year-old daughter, is grateful to have a place to call home and to continue reaching long-term goals.

At this event we announced a very special challenge gift built by numerous individuals and local organizations of \$175,000 which inspired others to support our programs to ensure The Road Home

continues to provide much needed services to Dane County families in need.

"Although I didn't achieve my childhood dream of becoming an astronaut, my dream of working for The Road Home has come true, and I still have dreams," said Kristin Rucinski. "I would like to be able to answer the phone and tell a crying mother or father or grandparent that we have space in shelter for them and their children." With the support of the community, The Road Home can achieve that dream.

We would like to thank our generous sponsors for underwriting the entire expenses of the Homes for Families Breakfast, guaranteeing that all donations raised from this event will directly benefit The Road Home programs. The CUNA Mutual Foundation was the lead sponsor, joined by Dane County Credit Union, Midwest Open MRI, The Great Dane Pub and Brewery and UW Health.

## Upcoming Events

Please join us at our office for a **Homes for Families Tour** to learn more about how The Road Home changes the lives of homeless families.

During these short, powerful, and informative tours, you will learn about family homelessness in our community and how The Road Home is working to help families transform their lives. We invite you to meet us and to see our work first-hand. This is not a fund-raiser and we guarantee it will only last 59 minutes!

- Tuesday, March 19, 7:00 p.m.
- Wednesday, April 10, 5:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, April 23, 7:00 p.m.
- Wednesday, May 8, 5:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, May 21, 7:00 p.m.

Mark Your Calendars:  
Sunday, June 2, 2013

**Families Moving Forward Event**



**CUNA MUTUAL GROUP**

**Common Purpose. Uncommon Commitment.**

## 2012 Year in Review (con't.)

acknowledging she made the Dean's List at Madison College has been etched in my mind.

My ears will always remember the shriek I heard down the hall when a family had been accepted to housing - and it was even better when I walked down to celebrate with them and realized the shriek was actually a different mom's excitement that her new friend was getting housing, despite the fact she herself was still homeless.

The strength and resiliency of the families we work with inspire me on a

daily basis. The financial support, wish-list donations and countless hours of volunteerism never cease to amaze me. The determination of our staff is second to none.

I am honored to play a small part in The Road Home's successes and disappointments with you. Cheers to us all for helping create brighter futures for 278 children! I look forward to working together to serve even more families and children in 2013, helping them accomplish goals on their road home.

# Why We Give

By Andrea Dearlove

The reasons behind someone's choice to give of their time and resources to support a nonprofit organization are personal and varied. For our family, being part of The Road Home's mission is the **right choice for us for so many reasons.**

We became involved with the Road Home's Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) Shelter program through our synagogue, Temple Beth El. At first, we cooked and dropped off dinners for the families staying at our Temple that week. Then, we signed up to spend dinner time with the families. And that was what first got us hooked, especially **spending time with the children.** Helping them with their homework, playing blocks, holding a baby until he or she fell asleep – it felt good to share this time with them.

When I became a co-coordinator for our synagogue in the shelter program, I had the opportunity to **work with and get**

**to know the staff.** Staff who answered the phone each and every time we called with a smile in their voice. Who coached us through the best way to support the families who were our guests 4 weeks a year. Who were always available to lend support and guidance, even in the evenings when they had already worked a busy day at the day center.

And getting to know **Kristin, the Executive Director,** whose dedication to the success of this organization and the families it helps in so many ways, is inspiring. When an organization shows an **understanding** of the complexity of the problems it is trying to solve, **commitment** from staff at every level, and a **personal touch** that finds accessible ways for you to be a part of making things better– you know it is an organization that is worthy of support.

But ultimately, our decision to support The Road Home is personal. There are few

things in this life that I cherish as much as lying next to my son at night, listening to him breathe as he falls asleep, knowing that he is safe and warm in our home. Wanting that for every family is the most basic reason why we support The Road Home.



*The Dearlove family*

## TAG is Back!

Advocacy at all levels is important for The Road Home staff and families. Our Tenant Advocacy Group (TAG) is designed to give homeless and formerly homeless individuals the chance to have their voices heard when policy decisions are made that will affect them. The group writes letters and makes phone calls to legislators at the city, county, state and federal levels. TAG has a new core group of members and is being facilitated by a MSW student, Karen Hall. They are excited to get the group going again after a year off. One of TAG's biggest accomplishments was working with state legislators to add \$2.2 million of homeless services in the state of Wisconsin during 2006. If you would like to get involved as a member or if you have a skill and would like to train TAG members (e.g. public speaking) please contact Takisha at 608-294-7998, ext. 312 or Karen at ext. 306.

### DID YOU KNOW?

**16.1 million** children in the U.S. lived in poverty in 2011 - that's more than one in five children

**Over 7 million** children live in deep poverty, subsisting on less than \$1,000 a month for a family of four

**11.8%** of all children under the age of 6 living in families in deep poverty

And deep poverty is much more prevalent among very young children, with 11.8 % of all children under the age of 6 living in families with incomes below half the poverty level.

### Wish List

- Diapers/Pull Ups (size 4-6)
- Cleaning supplies
- Paper towels
- Feminine hygiene products
- African American hair care products
- Baby Wipes
- Toilet paper
- Bath size bars of soap

### Ways to Volunteer

**Drivers:** Our Housing & Hope program is in need of volunteer drivers to transport families to the food pantry.

**Movers:** We need individuals who would help with furniture pick-ups and deliveries. It would be especially helpful if the volunteer has a truck that can be used.

**Overnight Hosts:** Individuals are needed to provide an overnight presence for our shelter program - usually a 8 or 9 pm until 7:00 am shift.

### Our new website is now live!

We now offer the convenience to make secure online donations. Be sure to visit

[www.trhome.org](http://www.trhome.org)

for information, stories, events and more.



# Dear Road Home,

My name is Eva and I would like to thank you on behalf of my family. If I had to sum up in one word how to describe The Road Home, it would be “hope,” because this is what they gave my family. Before meeting Georgie, our case manager at The Road Home, and the rest of Rapid Rehousing staff, my family was forced to divide in half after a brutal eviction in 2010.

After the first meeting with The Road Home the fog started to lift. The kind words and support they gave us on a weekly basis made our journey easier. Soon we were a family again living in an apartment. The helpfulness did not end there. It is just the beginning of a life-long relationship with professionals whom I now consider my friends and family. Georgie did more than find us a home, she helped our family as a whole: mind, body and soul.

Since moving into the apartment we have been living in for 2-years now, I am now going on my 2nd year as a teacher at KinderCare. In addition, I volunteer as a peer advocate for individuals recently diagnosed with cancer, helping them navigate scary and complicated systems. My husband and I rekindled our relationship through therapy. My two sons have entered 2nd and 6th grade successfully. My daughter has learned job ethics due to participating in a youth job workshop.

I still share family news with my former case manager. My family loves sharing all of their achievements with her and The Road Home staff. I get excited when the phone rings and its Georgie. We know that we are not “just a client” to The Road



Home, they treat you like family. Furthermore, this summer I met a family who had lost their home, and I immediately gave them The Road Home’s phone number.

A thousand thank yous wouldn’t be enough for all that you have given my family. Thank you for giving us hope for a better tomorrow.

Sincerely,  
**Eva & Family**

*Please contact us if you prefer to receive this newsletter electronically.*

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128 East Olin Avenue, Suite 202 • Madison, WI 53713

**the road home**  
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