

News From The Road Home

Dane County

Winter 2018

Homes for Families Breakfast Highlights Recent Successes



Alex and family

Over 500 people gathered at the Alliant Energy Center for The Road Home's 14th Annual Homes for Families Breakfast to help raise \$395,000 and celebrate progress in decreasing homelessness for families with children. The breakfast is The Road Home's most important fundraiser of the year, raising a significant proportion of the organization's annual budget. Funds raised help support housing programs, case management and other services for families with children transitioning from homelessness to housing.

Alex, the featured speaker at the breakfast, shared his story of transitioning from homelessness to housing with the assistance of The Road Home. Two years ago, Alex, his wife and his six kids were spending nights on the floor of The Salvation Army and going to The Road Home during the days. Alex was working at a fast food restaurant. Then, through a partnership with United Way of Dane County,

The Road Home, The Salvation Army, YWCA Madison, Meridian and the City of Madison's Community Development Authority, Alex's family was able to move into an apartment at Truax Apartments. Alex got a job working for Meridian where he has been for over a year. His family has been in stable housing for two years now. "Because of stable housing and stable employment, we've been able to move forward. I have been able to think of future possibilities for my family that would not have been possible to even imagine a few years ago. It's priceless when I see my kids smiling, laughing and having a good time together," Alex said.

Kristin Rucinski, executive director of The Road Home, talked about some of the ways The Road Home has expanded possibilities for families this past year. Moving into a new building has given us space to hold classes on topics such as how to purchase a home and, for middle and high school students, how to prepare for college. Through generous support and important partnerships, The Road Home has also expanded available housing programs with new affordable housing offered through The Breese, Heart Room and others. She also shared the exciting news that the newest Point-in-Time data shows that family homelessness in Dane County has decreased by nearly 50% in the past five years. Still, there is work to do with about 100 families in Dane County still in need of affordable housing.

The Homes for Families breakfast is successful because of the support of our generous sponsors, leadership donors, table hosts and guests. Thank you for coming together to make a lasting impact on families with children who have experienced homelessness in our community.

Breakfast Thanks

Our thanks to this year's generous sponsors:

Founder: CUNA Mutual Group Foundation and UW Health/UnityPoint Health-Meriter/Quartz; **Gold:** Madison Investment Advisors, MetaStar, National Guardian Life and Naviant; **Silver:** Alliant Energy, Alvarado Real Estate Group, Associated Bank, BMO Harris Bank, Frank Beverage Group, Reynolds Transfer and Storage, RSM, SubZero, and UW Credit Union; **Bronze:** Broihahn Management & Consulting LLC, First Weber Foundation, Foley and Lardner/Scott and Tess Klug, TASC, Terso Solutions, Titus Talent Strategies, Wisconsin Management Company and FGS The Restoration Company, Wisconsin Mutual Insurance, WPS Health Solutions and Zendesk

Generous leadership gifts were provided by:

CUNA Mutual Group Foundation, Laura and Mike Huggett, Tim and Kathy Mazur, MGE Foundation, and Jay and Katie Sekelsky.

For ways you can support The Road Home visit our website.



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Educational Support Opens New Doors for Kids

With some guidance from our educational specialist, Larissa is now enrolled in a CNA course she had given up on. A generous grant ensures our program will continue.

*Larissa, a senior in high school, did not see college in her future but she was interested in becoming a CNA (Certified Nursing Assistant). Larissa's high school offered CNA courses but she was not enrolled in the program. Larissa had asked her school counselor about the program but her counselor told her the classes were already full.

That could have been the end of the story, but fortunately it wasn't. Larissa was working with Qiana Holmes-Abanukam, The Road Home's Educational Specialist. Qiana knew that if Larissa was participating in the CNA program at her high school, she could qualify for scholarships for CNA training after high school. Qiana met with Larissa and her parents and provided some coaching about what steps Larissa could take to advocate for herself and get into the program. A week later, Larissa reported that she had spoken to the counselor again and had been accepted into the school's CNA program. Qiana and Larissa have now started the process of enrolling Larissa in Madison College.

Stories like these show that sometimes a little extra support can go a long way. And that's exactly what Qiana does—provide that extra support for kids to reach their educational goals in families who face some of the highest barriers. Qiana works with the 30 families living in The Road Home's two different Housing & Hope sites. Each of these families has experienced homelessness and are now housed and working to maintain stability and meet individually set goals. Research shows that these children face an uphill battle – but that with the resources they need, they can be successful.

Established only three years ago, this new program aims to increase students' school attendance, increase the number of referrals to supportive programs, and increase performances set forth in United Way's Schools of Hope including children reading at a 3rd grade level and completing algebra



by 10th grade. Already, results are starting to come in. Qiana has worked closely with 60 students. One hundred percent of those who could have graduated from 8th grade or high school have done so. Children have also been matched with supportive services and mentors.

Recently, a generous gift from CUNA Mutual Foundation has ensured that the program will continue for the next three years. This means more children in our community will receive the resources they need to be successful.

*Names have been changed to protect the family's privacy.

The Road Home Dane County Receives \$525,000 Three-Year Grant From The CUNA Mutual Group Foundation

The Road Home Dane County is the recipient of a \$525,000 grant from CUNA Mutual Group Foundation. This grant is the largest in The Road Home's 19-year history and will be used for education services, case management and capacity building over the next three years.

“This transformative gift will impact the future of children in our programs who face some of the highest barriers to housing stability and academic success and help us increase our capacity to serve additional families through supportive services and enhanced training and technology,” said Kristin Rucinski, The Road Home's executive director. This funding will help us address racial disparities and other underlying causes of homelessness. “In addition to the direct impact, we believe CUNA Mutual Group Foundation's leadership gift will inspire others who share a commitment to ending family homelessness.”

Wish List

- Diapers/pull ups
- Toilet paper
- Baby wipes
- Feminine hygiene products
- Cleaning supplies
- Hair-care products designed for African-American hair
- Paper towels
- Gifts cards for gas and grocery

For sanitary and safety reasons, please note that we can only accept unopened items. We also prefer full-sized (instead of travel-sized) items when possible.

Newsletter Update

In order to conserve precious resources, both paper and funds, The Road Home is moving toward providing the newsletter electronically. This will also allow us to provide more timely information to you. We will NOT send frequent email communications – only the newsletter and an occasional update. As with all personal information, we will NOT sell or share your email address.

Please help us by sending your current email address to Sheila Kirschbaum, Business/Development Coordinator at sheilak@trhome.org.

The Road Home Receives Generous Support

These foundations, businesses and organizations have recently awarded grants and major gifts in support of The Road Home's programs.

CUNA Mutual Group Foundation: \$525,000 for education services, case management and capacity building over the next three years

Oscar Rennebohm Foundation: \$150,000 for Building the Future Capital Campaign for the new building

UW Credit Union Foundation: \$65,000 for rental assistance and case management

Caritas Foundation: \$25,000 for Housing & Hope case management

American Girl Children's Fund: \$10,000 for Little Picassos art program and general support

Steve Stricker American Family Insurance Foundation: \$10,000 for case management at The Breese Apartments

Thank you to these funders and all our donors for their generosity and commitment to The Road Home's mission.

Upcoming Events

Please join us at our new office for a **Homes for Families Information Session** to learn more about how The Road Home changes the lives of homeless families. During these short, powerful, and informative presentations, 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 firsthand. This is not a fundraiser and we guarantee it will only last 59 minutes!

2019 Dates:

Wednesday, January 23, 5:30 p.m.

Tuesday, February 19, 4:30 p.m.

Wednesday, March 6, 5:30 p.m.

Mark Your Calendars:

Families Moving Forward Celebration

August 2019

Location and date - TBD

Thursday, November 7, 2019

15th Annual Homes for Families Fundraising Breakfast

7:30 a.m.-8:30 a.m. at the Alliant Energy Center.

Why we give – Julie Bauer, Alliant Energy Foundation



Homelessness puts extreme stress on families and kids. In an environment like that, it's hard to see beyond your circumstances and hope for a different life.

Our mission statement at Alliant Energy is "Powering Beyond." It means looking past what's ordinary and expected and working toward something greater. The Road Home helps families do that. Just read through a few recent stories on their website. A homeless woman moves into permanent housing, stable employment – and goes on to continue her education in an important field. A 5-year-old celebrates his birthday at home for the first time. Students' behavior and grades transform after a move into a safe new apartment. Wow – that's why we give.

At The Road Home, skillful caseworkers guide families into a new chapter that exceeds their expectations. They take them beyond what they'd imagined for themselves.

Our Alliant Energy Foundation has been a primary supporter of The Road Home for the past five years. For our Foundation, helping families is a key focus area. When families stabilize, so does the community. The Road Home's work goes to the heart of so many important issues.

One of my favorite stories – published just this November – is about a little girl named Ava. After several months homeless, Ava's mom secured an apartment. Ava tore through her new home, shouting "It's a dream! It's a dream!"

That's the type of beyond we're talking about. We wish The Road Home all the best as they continue to raise stability and spark hope in families across Dane County.

Dear Road Home,

I wanted to share my experience with the Rapid Rehousing program, a collaboration through The Road Home, YWCA, The Salvation Army and United Way of Dane County, with funding from the Predolin Foundation.

In 2014, I became a participant of this program through The Road Home after being referred by ECI- Early Childhood Initiative. When I entered the program I was a new mother of a daughter who was 6 months old. I had come from a broken home with no training of balancing a healthy lifestyle. I was new to both The Road Home and ECI programs. When my case manager, Qiana, and I started working together I struggled with completing my GED, budgeting finances and overall balancing a healthy load between parenting, work, home and school. Working with Qiana Holmes-Abanukam was an amazing and extremely helpful experience. Qiana was able to provide insight, education and program referrals to identify/improve areas of struggle. While in the program, I had repaired a substantial portion of my credit, earned my GED and started the process for obtaining my Associates in Business Management. I have maintained stable housing, employment and overall parenting, work, home and school balance. I have reached all goals set within the program regarding career, education, parenting and housing. After completing both programs through The Road Home and ECI, I feel like I have the tools to help myself and others. Over the past few years, I've taken what I've learned from these programs and educated family and friends who have expressed improvements in their lives.

In the beginning of 2018, I started the process of founding a home care cooperative in the Dane County area to build a space for women with similar backgrounds of hardship, family history or culture barriers. My cooperative isn't only to provide income but an environment that encourages, educates and will provide opportunities to gain the confidence to create a healthy lifestyle balance.



Georgia and daughter

I look back at my life prior to being a part of the Rapid Rehousing program, and a feeling of gratitude overwhelms me. I can truly say this program has been a great inspiration to directing my life to a much healthier, limitless future of opportunities for my daughter and me. The support, tools, and knowledge gained from Qiana has been life changing and my current situation is an example of this.

Sincerely,

Georgia and daughter

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