

News From The Road Home

Dane County

Spring 2024

Understanding the Crisis of Homelessness and The Road Home's Compassionate Response

The Faces of Homelessness

Homelessness does not discriminate, touching the lives of people from diverse backgrounds, ages, and walks of life. From veterans and families with children to the elderly and the youth, the face of homelessness is as varied as it is heartbreaking. It's crucial to understand that behind every statistic is a human story marked by struggle, resilience, and the yearning for stability.

Root Causes: A Complex Web

The roots of homelessness run deep, intertwined with a complex web of socioeconomic factors. Among the primary drivers are:

- **Affordable Housing Crisis:** The scarcity of affordable housing has pushed many to the brink, with rents outpacing income growth in numerous regions.
- **Poverty and Unemployment:** Financial instability, often due to job loss or insufficient wages, directly contributes to the risk of homelessness.
- **Health Issues:** Mental health limitations, addiction, and physical disabilities can both result from and lead to homelessness, creating a vicious cycle that is hard to break.
- **Systemic Inequalities:** Discrimination based on race, gender, and sexuality exacerbates vulnerabilities, disproportionately affecting marginalized communities.
- **Life Shocks:** Personal crises such as family breakdowns, domestic violence, and unexpected major expenses can rapidly lead to homelessness.

The Effects of Homelessness

The consequences of homelessness extend far beyond the absence of a physical roof. It often leads to severe health problems, exacerbated by the lack of access to adequate healthcare. It strains mental health, fuels cycles of poverty, and hinders educational and employment opportunities, particularly affecting children's development and future prospects.

A Call to Action: Towards Solutions

Addressing homelessness requires a multifaceted approach, focusing on both immediate relief and long-term solutions:

- **Affordable Housing Initiatives:** Expanding the availability of affordable housing is fundamental. Policies that incentivize the construction of low-income housing and offer rental assistance can make a significant difference.
- **Support Services:** Comprehensive support services, including healthcare, mental health services, substance abuse treatment, and job training, are crucial for helping individuals transition out of homelessness.
- **Prevention Programs:** Efforts to prevent homelessness are equally important, such as providing emergency financial assistance, mediation services, and support for those at risk of eviction.
- **Community Engagement:** Raising awareness and fostering community involvement can lead to innovative solutions and stronger support networks for those affected by homelessness.
- **Policy and Advocacy:** Advocating for policy changes that address the root causes of homelessness, protect the rights of people experiencing homelessness, and allocate resources to effective programs is essential.



The Road Home staff at The Homes for Families Fundraising Breakfast

How The Road Home Helps

The Road Home seeks long-term solutions to homelessness by helping families find and maintain stable, affordable housing. Our comprehensive approach involves not only relieving the immediate crisis but also building skills, resources, and relationships for long-term success. Working collaboratively with partners and the community, The Road Home is committed to decreasing racial housing disparities and creating sustainable solutions.

Every child deserves a home

890 W Wingra Dr. | Madison, WI 53715

trhome.org



Lai'Kita's Journey Featured in BRAVA Magazine

Discover Lai'Kita's inspiring journey from homelessness to prosperity in BRAVA's latest issue. Her story highlights the transformative power of community support and personal resilience. *Read more about her story in BRAVA's digital issue at www.bravamagazine.com.*



Don Miller Subaru West & Operation Warm: Spreading Kindness

The Road Home extends gratitude to Don Miller Subaru West and Operation Warm for their generous donation. Don Miller Subaru West, honored with the 2023 Subaru Love Promise Community Commitment Award, partnered with Operation Warm to provide new winter essentials for children. This collaboration exemplifies community spirit and compassion, ensuring warmth and comfort for the children we serve.

This partnership goes beyond just material support. It fosters a sense of hope and solidarity within our community, showing that when organizations come together, meaningful change is possible. Through initiatives like this, we not only provide immediate relief but also empower families and children to envision a brighter future. Together, we are building a stronger, more caring community for all.

Widen Family Foundation Donation

The Widen Family Foundation has once again demonstrated its commitment to making a positive impact on the community, as they hosted a Holiday Open House on Thursday, December 14, 2023, that not only brought joy and warmth but also raised a staggering \$80,000 for The Road Home Dane County.

The Holiday Open House, organized by the Widen Family Foundation, served as a platform to rally support for The Road Home, an organization dedicated to ending homelessness in Dane County. Attendees were not only treated to festive celebrations but were also given the opportunity to contribute to a cause that resonates deeply with the foundation's values.

The \$80,000 donation will play a pivotal role in providing crucial services and assistance to individuals and families experiencing homelessness. This substantial contribution reflects the Widen Family Foundation's understanding of the pressing issues faced by the community and their unwavering dedication to being a force for positive change.

The Road Home Dane County, deeply appreciative of the Widen Family Foundation's generosity, looks forward to utilizing the funds to expand their reach and impact.

The Road Home Receives Generous Support

These foundations, businesses, organizations, and congregations recently contributed \$2,500 and above in support of The Road Home's programs (Dec 1, 2023 - March 1, 2024).

\$2,500 - \$4,999

Green Bay Packers Foundation
Madison-Kipp Corporation
Oakwood Village Prairie Ridge Spiritual Life Committee

\$5,000 - \$9,999

Colony Brands
Gundlach Family Fund of Messiah Lutheran Church
Illinois Tool Works, Inc.
Lucille
Madison Rotary Foundation
Rotter Family Foundation
Steve Stricker American Family Insurance Foundation
Strand Associates

\$10,000 - \$24,999

American Family Insurance Dreams Foundation
Lau and Bea Christensen Charitable Foundation
Messiah Lutheran Church
Orchard Ridge United Church of Christ
Riordan Family Foundation
US Bank Foundation

\$25,000+

Epic Systems Corporation
Widen Family Foundation

Thank you to all our donors for your generosity and commitment to our mission.



Why I Give: Matt Julian



I have been a Social Worker since 2009, and specifically worked in homeless services for the last nine years. Throughout my career, I have interacted with The Road Home in numerous capacities. I have always been impressed by the leadership they provide within homeless services, and the quality of the services they provide the families they serve. Social Work is my second career. I initially completed a Culinary Arts degree at Madison College and worked for a short time in that field.

While I was working in kitchens, I was volunteering at a recovery clinic in town. I found myself happiest on the days I volunteered, so I decided to return to school. I have lived in Dane County almost my entire life. I live with my amazing daughter, Ruby (10) and our dog, Chonk. I joined the Board of Directors in March of 2023. As a first year Board member, I've spent most of my time learning and listening about the operations and culture at The Road Home. I have particularly enjoyed my time working on the Development Committee to plan fundraising events which are crucial to achieving our mission at The Road Home.

When I first began working in homeless services, I remember seeing a family pack up all their belongings at a day shelter to move back into their vehicle for the evening. I was stunned to see the daily grind families experiencing homelessness go through. The lack of affordable housing often displaces families and traumatizes both the parents and children. The Road Home seeks to end family homelessness and to support families in healing from the trauma they endured. It's hard not to connect to that mission, especially when I've seen it in action at The Road Home.

To end homelessness, it takes housing families, supporting healing, building landlord relationships, navigating complex systems, constant fundraising to meet the needs and grow the programs. It will take repeated efforts to chip away at the disparities that exist in our community that lead to homelessness. When choosing where to focus my dollars, I want to support an agency that provides those services at a high quality. It has been pretty clear working in homeless services in our community that The Road Home excels in all of these areas.

"Food, shelter, and water are our basic needs for survival." -Matt Julian

Having a home allows me to meet those everyday basic needs without fear and allows me to focus efforts at enriching my life in other areas. I can reliably provide meals, celebrate traditions/holidays, and develop a schedule to then pursue our passions. I have strengthened relationships with family members, further developed my working skills to advance my career, and am able to pursue hobbies of interest. Housing should not just be a privilege; it should be a right. Families experiencing homelessness are our neighbors in the community that are unhoused. All of our neighbors deserve the safety, security, and comfort a home can provide.

Save The Date : The Road Home's 20th Annual Homes for Families Fundraising Breakfast

This year commemorates 25 years of dedication to our mission to end family homelessness and we're thrilled to announce that The Road Home has set the date for our much-anticipated 20th Annual Homes for Families Fundraising Breakfast: **Thursday, October 24 at the Sheraton Madison Hotel!**

Mark your calendars as we gear up to celebrate two decades of tradition, community, and compassion. Join us for a morning filled with warmth, camaraderie, and the shared commitment to ending family homelessness.



Scan the QR code or visit trhome.org to donate today! You can also use the enclosed envelope to donate and support our mission of ending family homelessness.

Contact Meghan Salzwedel, Development Director, for information on joining our Giving Society: meghans@trhome.org

We're excited to share that our organization has earned a 2023 Platinum Seal of Transparency with Candid!
Now, you can support our work with trust and confidence by viewing our #NonprofitProfile: trhome.org/who-we-are





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Dear Road Home Community,

Amarah, a local mother, was in need of safe, stable childcare for her 3 young kids. After experiencing literal homelessness, Amarah was enrolled in a permanent supportive housing program at The Road Home. Along with her on-site housing advocate, she was able to look into options for affordable, quality childcare with the foundation of stable housing secured. Amarah's housing advocate at The Road Home helped connect her to funding for The Playing Field where she says her children thrived. "It truly takes a village and sometimes people forget that," says Amarah. "The class sizes were small, teachers engaged with my children and had a positive impact on their lives". Without family in the area for supplemental childcare support, The Playing Field opened many doors for Amarah and her family.

And with her children so well cared for, she was able to have breathing room and respite mothers of young children are so often in need of and deserve. The relief of quality childcare along with housing has empowered Amarah to continue to dream for her family's future.

Scan the QR code to watch Amarah's story featured on WKOW along with her Housing Advocate, Lydia. Thank you for sharing in Amarah's successes and uplifting her voice!

