

News From The Road Home

Dane County

Summer 2025

Our Partners

Balsam Gets a Boost of Care from TruStage Volunteers

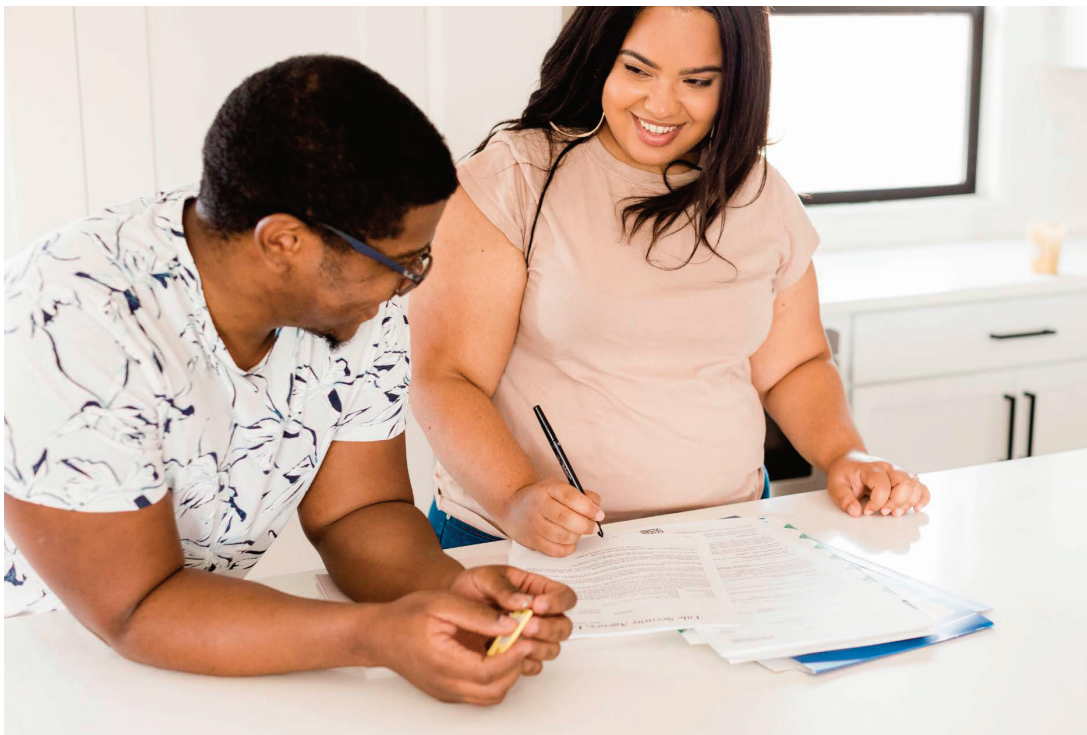


As part of their Community Impact Day, TruStage volunteers joined us at our Balsam location to clear overgrown brush, remove trash, and spread fresh mulch—creating a cleaner, safer, and more welcoming space for families.

Clothing Drive Brings Practical Support to Local Families



Housing Advocate Briahna organized a clothing drive for The Clothing Center in Stoughton, WI, providing professional attire and everyday essentials for families preparing for new employment opportunities.



Bringing Housing Within Reach: How Landlord Risk Mitigation Funding Expands Housing Access

Jobs are up. Households are growing. So why is affordable housing still out of reach?

At The Road Home, landlord risk mitigation funding helps families overcome common barriers to housing. These flexible resources can cover holding fees, minor repairs, and vacancy costs, providing reassurance to landlords and helping families maintain stable housing.

Families who use rental assistance are often denied when applying for a lease, despite being responsible renters who typically stay longer than market-rate tenants (“Participation, Transition, and Length of Stay in Federal Housing Assistance Programs,” Greenlee & McClure, 2024). Misconceptions about vouchers, added paperwork, or concerns about late payments and damages can make some landlords hesitant to participate in rental assistance programs. Landlord risk mitigation funds can help ease those concerns and open the door to more housing options.

First introduced in 2018 through *A Hand and a Home*, this funding model has continued to be part of larger conversations about housing solutions in Wisconsin.

Landlord mitigation funding is one of many tools communities are exploring to strengthen partnerships with landlords and reduce barriers to housing.

Between 2010 and 2021, Dane County’s job market grew by 14%, adding over 38,000 jobs. During that same period, the county saw an increase of about 42,000 households—but the housing supply didn’t keep up (Dane County Regional Housing Strategy, 2024). As a result, rents have risen and competition for housing has intensified, especially for families facing additional barriers.

Conversations around landlord risk mitigation funding reflect a broader effort to understand what it takes to make housing more accessible for everyone. It’s an evolving topic, and The Road Home continues to stay connected to these discussions as we work to support families and collaborate with housing providers in our community.

Every child deserves a home

890 W Wingra Dr. | Madison, WI 53715

trhome.org



Beyond Housing: Relationships That Build Stability

Allison's work on our scattered-site team shows how stability grows when support comes from all sides. By meeting families where they live, she builds trust with tenants and landlords—creating open communication that helps prevent housing crises before they start.

This approach reflects the key “triangle of support” between landlords, housing advocates, and tenants, where each partner plays a vital role. Strong relationships and timely communication do more than secure housing—they build a foundation for lasting stability. This partnership model is at the heart of The Road Home's goal to strengthen landlord-tenant relationships and our broader mission to create equitable, sustainable housing solutions across Dane County.

Scan the QR code to read our Q&A with Allison and learn how she builds trust, prevents crises, and supports long-term stability—one relationship at a time.



When Numbers Don't Add Up: The Reality of Rising Costs

When our program team sat down together this summer to talk about the budgeting challenges families face, one truth stood out clearly: for many, the income just isn't enough to cover the true cost of living. Rising rent, utilities, childcare, transportation, and basic needs often push family budgets beyond their limits.

Traditional budgeting models, like the 50/30/20 rule—which suggests allocating 50% of income to needs, 30% to wants, and 20% to savings—often miss the mark for families living paycheck to paycheck. In reality, essential expenses such as rent, utilities, childcare, and transportation frequently consume more than half of a household's income, leaving little to no wiggle room for savings or unexpected costs.

“Most people don't have an emergency fund of \$2,000 for a security deposit and rent,” says Program Coordinator Madelyn. “So you can imagine how challenging it is for families experiencing homelessness to navigate these costs.”

As a result, families face tough choices every month, juggling priorities and making sacrifices that can feel overwhelming and unpredictable.

Understanding these challenges reminds us that supporting families means more than numbers—it means walking alongside them as they navigate a complex financial journey, building both housing stability and financial independence.

Bridging the Digital Divide: Techquity Helps Families Stay Connected

In today's world, digital access isn't a luxury—it's a lifeline. Launched by United Way of Dane County, the Techquity program was created to close the digital divide and support families working toward more stable futures. Without access to reliable internet and devices, everyday tasks like: searching for jobs, completing school assignments, or connecting with resources can become major barriers to progress. By providing laptops and expanding digital access, Techquity is helping families in our housing programs and across Dane County access opportunities, stay connected, and move forward with confidence.

See how Techquity is bridging the digital divide and helping families thrive. Learn more at www.techquitywi.org.

Save The Date: The Road Home's 21st Annual Homes for Families Fundraising Breakfast



Families in Power: Celebrating Resilience, Building Equity

Join us on **October 23, 2025, at 8:00 AM** at the **Alliant Energy Center** for a meaningful morning centered on the strength, resilience, and power of families in our community. Hear real stories, connect with local changemakers, and learn how we can work together to create more equitable housing opportunities across Dane County.

Want to get involved? Individuals can sign up to be table hosts. Businesses and organizations are invited to sponsor the event. For more information, contact **Elliott Valentine, Development Director**, at elliottv@trhome.org.

Scan the QR code to order from our Amazon Wish List and have items shipped directly to our main office.



Why I Give : Badgerland Girl Scout Troop 8292



Each year, as Girl Scout Cookie Season approaches, our troop gathers in early February to choose a cause we want to support with a portion of our cookie sale proceeds. Before a single box is sold, we sit down together to brainstorm organizations and issues we care about. It's a tradition that helps

ground our efforts in service, reminding us that being a Girl Scout is about more than selling cookies—it's about making a difference in our community. Our scouts take this decision seriously. They come with ideas close to their hearts—helping animals, supporting people experiencing homelessness, and giving back to those in need. After thoughtful discussion and a troop-wide vote, we selected The Road Home. Their mission to help families experiencing homelessness find housing and stability really resonated with the girls. One scout, Eleanor, later reflected that this choice reminded her of the part of the Girl Scout Law that says we should “help people at all times.”

As we learned more about The Road Home and the issue of homelessness, we were surprised to find out how many kids in our own schools have experienced homelessness or housing instability. It was a powerful moment for the scouts to realize that this isn't just something that happens far away—it's something that affects classmates, neighbors, and members of our own community. That made our commitment to helping even stronger.

In addition to making a financial donation using cookie proceeds, our troop wanted to do something hands-on. We worked together to assemble welcome baskets for families entering housing through The Road Home. These baskets included items like cleaning supplies, kitchen towels, toiletries, and socks—essentials to help make a house feel like a home. The girls especially connected with this part of the project, and many shared how meaningful it felt to pick out the items themselves.

One scout, Kate, said she liked choosing things at the store because “it felt good to know someone might smile when they open the basket.” Another, Nora P., said learning about kids who don't have a safe place to sleep made her feel sad, and that she wanted “to help make things better for them.”

Supporting The Road Home helped our girls grow not only as leaders but as compassionate community members. They learned that every box of cookies they sold could be part of something bigger. We are proud of their dedication and grateful to The Road Home for the incredible work they do.



Scan the QR code or visit trhome.org to donate today! You can also use the enclosed envelope to donate and support families experiencing homelessness in the Dane County community.

What Does It Really Take to Make an Impact?

At Fundraising Day Wisconsin 2025: United for Impact, staff from The Road Home joined nonprofit leaders and fundraisers from across the state to exchange ideas, build connections, and strengthen the ways we support families facing homelessness. One question echoed through every session, conversation, and coffee break: How do we create lasting change together?

Hosted by the Wisconsin Chapters of the Association of Fundraising Professionals, this year's event centered on the power of collaboration, advocacy, and community-rooted philanthropy. It challenged us to think bigger, listen more deeply, and sharpen how we communicate and connect with those who share our vision for a more just and compassionate world.

Meet Elliott Valentine, Your Partner in Impact

We're excited to welcome Elliott Valentine as The Road Home's new Development Director! With a strong background in nonprofit fundraising and a passion for social justice, his philosophy around fundraising is all about connection, collaboration, and long-term impact.

Elliott shares, “The good news is, we have powerful tools to address homelessness in our community—and in my role, I get to share that good news and help make change happen.”

Read more about Elliott and his approach to building a stronger, more connected community through fundraising:
www.trhome.org/blog



Contact Elliott Valentine, Development Director, for information on joining the Homes for Families Society: elliottv@trhome.org

We're excited to share that our organization has earned a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator!
Now, you can support our work with trust and confidence by learning more at trhome.org/who-we-are.



890 W Wingra Dr. | Madison, WI 53715

Address Service Requested

Please contact news@trhome.org if you prefer to receive this newsletter electronically.

Nonprofit Org.
US Postage Paid
Madison, WI
Permit #2950

Save The Date: Homes for Families Fundraising Breakfast 2025

The **Homes for Families Fundraising Breakfast** is a special way for our community to come together, celebrate progress, and support families on their path to stable housing. Mark your calendars for **Thursday, October 23, 2025**, at the **Alliant Energy Center**.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who joined us last year—it was a meaningful morning full of connection and impact. We hope to see you again this year as we work together to make an even bigger impact.

Want to see highlights from last year or find out how to get involved? Visit www.trhome.org.

