

HIGHLIGHTS

Mom and Daughter Working Together to get Whole Family Housed Cynthia and her oldest daughter are getting back on their feet thanks to your support.

While living at Hesed House Cynthia, a mom of 4, has been working hard at a job she recently obtained (and then got a promotion at within the first week), has found childcare for her young children and is so close to launching her family into housing by saving all she can for a security deposit. Her daughter is doing the same while living locally with a family member and finishing her senior year of high school. Together, they are very close to having enough to pull their family out of homelessness and into housing. One of the most remarkable team efforts we have ever seen! Fighting tears after hearing us list her accomplishments to her Cynthia shares, "It is so nice to hear someone notice the work I have done and tell me they are proud of me. I know I am so close, I know I will keep working until we are housed!"

"The community here at Hesed House has been amazing to my family. You have given me a safe place when I had nowhere else to go!" The family also recently celebrated what they hope will be the last birthday party in the shelter for little Eva, wearing pink in the foreground of the photo. (You can even spot some of the birthday messages on the white board behind



Cynthia and her 3 youngest children celebrating their family's recent accomplishments.

them in their picture!) Of course, she had a gift and a party here at Hesed, but we think a new home for her mom, brother and sisters will be best gift she might receive this year, and we thank you for helping provide the opportunity to get back on their feet to such a sweet family!

"The community here at Hesed House has been amazing to my family. You gave me a safe place when I had nowhere else to go."

Dear People of Hessed,

Everything I know about hope, I learned from homeless individuals.

I have seen countless individuals lose all hope, accepting that they will be homeless (or addicted or mentally ill or unemployed or whatever) for their entire lives. There is a predictable pattern:

- *First, people lose faith in others.* They accept that the world is a hostile place and they are the only ones that look out for their own interests.
- *Next, they lose faith in themselves.* They accept that they have no ability to change a cold harsh world.
- *Finally, cynicism becomes a form of wisdom.* In the face of insurmountable odds, hope is irrational and naïve.

I have also seen countless individuals discover hope again, finding the courage to see a different future for themselves and their families. Here, too, there is a pattern:

- *It starts in the dark.* It begins deep in the human soul for no apparent reason other than the miracle that is the human spirit. Against all odds, a coal from a long-dead fire begins to glow and give off heat.
- *At first it looks foolish.* When an alcoholic with slurred speech declares that he will get sober, it looks utterly absurd. When hope is in its infancy, people mock it.
- *As it grows, hope comes under attack by cynics with an agenda.* Friends, family or strangers oftentimes try to undermine recovery for their own selfish ends (misery loves company).
- *Finally, hope wins.* In retrospect, what had looked inconceivable appears inevitable.

My friends, I don't offer my observations on the demise and rebirth of hope as mere intellectual curiosity: Our country has lost hope.

We have lost faith in others, accepting that our country is a hostile divided place and we must each look out for our own interests. *We have lost faith in ourselves*, resigning ourselves to the fact that we are unable to effect change. *We have mistaken cynicism for wisdom*—TV pundits compete with one another to peddle the bleakest vision of our collective future.

Fortunately, we have experts in our midst. Perhaps we can all learn how to hope from our homeless neighbors. Just maybe, the most vulnerable can show the way forward.

Our country's healing will begin in darkness, when our collective spirit can no longer tolerate division and fear. *At first, it will look foolish.* Even writing this, it feels silly to even think about a country without deep partisan divide. *Before hope wins, cynics will attack it.* We must learn to ignore pundits and politicians who profit from our fear of one another. *Hope will win*; it seems inconceivable now, but it always does...

My friends, we find greatness together, or not at all.

Peace,

Ryan J. Dowd, Atty., MPA
Volunteer, Donor & Executive Director



Hope will win; it seems inconceivable now, but it always does...

NIU College of Law has a Legal Clinic at Hessed House!

NIU Professor and students end homelessness, alleviate plight for those served.

Since 2014, the Northern Illinois University College of Law Health Advocacy Clinic has helped end homelessness for clients they have successfully assisted with obtaining public benefits. Under the leadership of Professor Colleen Boraca, batches of 3 to 8 law students at a time work alongside her in advocating and assisting the population we serve providing truly critical and life changing services. Colleen and her students provide legal counsel on everything from obtaining Social Security disability to appealing insurance claim denials.



Professor Colleen Boraca meets with a guest that successfully obtained benefits through the clinic's services.

"Our partnership with Aunt Martha's (the healthcare clinic located in our CRC) and Hessed House is interdisciplinary collaboration at its finest," explained Colleen. She goes on to say, "The clinic's location, onsite at Hessed House, breaks the transportation barrier that homeless individuals often face. We are truly a part of the Hessed family here and the clients we serve see that. It creates an atmosphere where they are more likely to open up to us so that we can serve them."

"Our partnership with Aunt Martha's (the healthcare clinic located in our CRC) and Hessed House is interdisciplinary collaboration at its finest."

The law clinic assisted one of our former guests in obtaining benefits that, in turn, allowed him to obtain and sustain his housing. He shares, "Colleen and her students showed me that someone actually cared about my

legal situation. I was provided with personalized attention for my case, and that made all the difference for me."

The clinic not only changes the lives of the guests they are able to assist each year, but also impacts the course of the law students who serve there. She shares, "Our students leave here totally changed. They learn that pro bono work like this is always, always worth their time no matter where they end up practicing law."



Michael, Francine and their kids buy their new family vehicle!

TLC Family on the Move!

Michael and Francine have been making moves! This Mom and Dad duo have had the opportunity to check off some major "to do's" off of their list in the last few weeks, thanks to your support and their hard work!

- Francine obtaining her Driver's License
- Michael obtaining employment
- Buying an affordable family car

"We will always be grateful for the support we receive from the staff and donors at Hessed House," shares dad, Michael. "We are hoping to, very soon, find housing so we can check the biggest thing off of our list as well!"

Counting Miracles: Successes from January 2018 – March 2018



TOTAL OF ALL 47 OUTCOMES
1146

Crushing Goals in TLC!

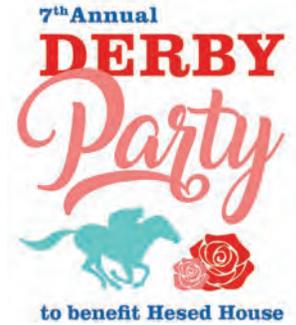
One of our TLC moms has her sights set on the future of her family, thanks to your support! Lex recently bought a car with money she saved to make it easier to get her kids to school and herself to work so she can continue to save and move her adorable crew into housing soon!



Lex and her kids excited about their mom's recent accomplishments!

Thank you to everyone that made the 2018 Derby Party our largest one!

A special thank you to the following event sponsors!

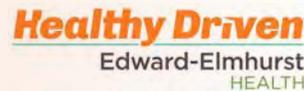


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