

HIGHLIGHTS

Single Mom and Five Kids: HOUSED!

Tikira and children escaped abuse and have a safe place to call home, thanks to you.



Tikira, DeVonte, Daniya, Anna and Danny during a recent visit to see their "Hesed Family."

It never occurred to Tikira how much fun her kids could have with doors. That is, until she watched her five kids opening and closing their bedroom doors in their new home over and over on the very first day they moved in. "They were just SO excited to have their own spaces, they could not stop playing with their bedroom doors!" explains mom, Tikira.

"I never realized how strong I was!"

After collecting her kids, a few of their things, and leaving an emotionally abusive situation in 2015, Tikira made it her goal to heal herself and regain her independence for the sake of her children. Accessing local resources, she was able to seek help to work through the abuse she experienced, "I never realized how strong I was!"

Once she was referred to Hesed House's Transitional Living Community, the family of six spent about a year there. "I am so blessed

to have been able to stay in TLC, it helped me get my feet back on the ground" she shared. While in TLC Tikira explained her thought process, "I visualized my kids riding bikes outside of our home and even the nightlights they would have in their room. I stayed motivated, persistent and consistent until I found a place I could afford."

Today, we are happy to report that each of her kids has their very own nightlight by their own beds in their new home, thanks to your support.

Dear People of Hesed,

I failed a homeless mother and her daughters recently. At least, I failed to live up to the standard we set for ourselves.

It was a beautiful summer afternoon, the kind of day where you whistle without realizing it. The sun was so bright and the breeze so refreshing that I was thinking more about ice cream than homelessness. (It is hard to think about suffering *all* the time.)

She looked to be in her early thirties, with light brown shoulder-length hair and a petite frame. Her two daughters were in that awkward pre-teen stage where boys and pimples are supposed to matter more than food and shelter. They looked like smaller versions of their mother.

I bumped into the mother and her daughters in the lobby of Hesed House. She had just become homeless. Not in the past few weeks. Not in the past few days. It had been in the past few minutes!

She had a million questions. I answered them all, one at a time. When she was out of questions, they quietly left to wait for dinner.

I didn't do anything wrong, per se. I also didn't do anything above and beyond for her.

A family was experiencing one of the most traumatic moments of their lives, and I responded with the same gravity as someone asking me directions to the store. I didn't ask when they last ate. I didn't ask if they needed any clothing. I didn't try to figure out if they were afraid.

Five minutes after they left, the magnitude of the moment—and my own failure—came crashing in on me. I frantically tried to find them, but couldn't.

I don't fully understand what happened. Standing in the lobby, talking to the mother and daughters, homelessness had seemed so routine. Suffering had seemed so ordinary. I wasn't jaded or cynical. Having spent most of my life at Hesed House, occasionally it just seems normal.

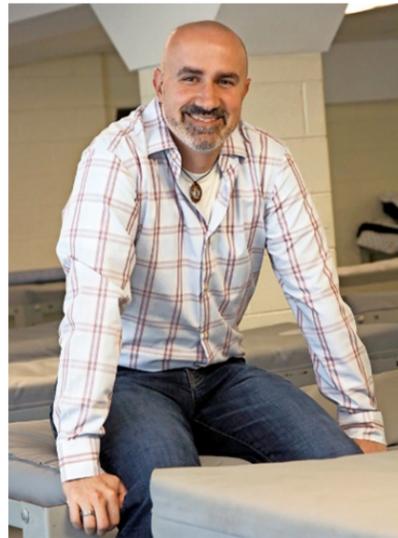
There is nothing normal or ordinary or routine about what happens at Hesed House. I have met hundreds (thousands?) of people on the day they became homeless. Every other time I have felt the overwhelming presence of God (like being "*immersed in the divine*" is the only way to describe it). God's work happens at Hesed House. Souls are mended. Bodies are healed. Lives are saved. The world is repaired.

Shame on me for forgetting that, even for a moment...

Peace,

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

God's work happens at Hesed House.



Faith Calls Family to Feed Homeless Neighbors

Sikh family has personally fed more than 8,000 people in 10 months!



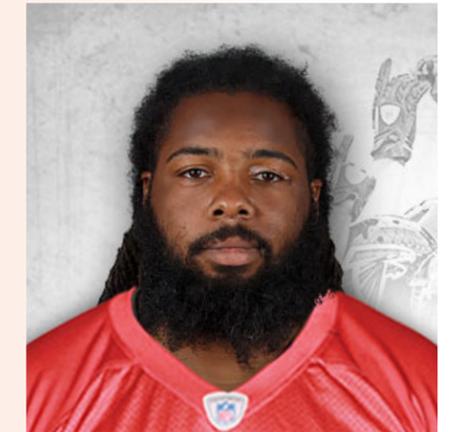
Sukhvinder (father), Pradeep (mother), Tasleen and Divjot following their last lunch shift.

One of the three main duties of the Sikh religion is to give to charity and care for others. The Singh-Kaur family take that very duty seriously. Since first coming to Hesed House last October, they have prepared and served breakfast, lunch, or dinner over 50 times. Each meal can serve up to 200 people, and takes the Singh-Kaur family ten hours to prepare. They then drive the food to Hesed House and personally serve it to our guests.

"We believe in Hesed's mission because equality is one of the things that makes our religion stand out."

"Hesed House gives us an opportunity to not only share our food, but our time and money as well," explains dad, Sukhvinder. "We believe in Hesed's mission because equality is one of the things that makes our religion stand out. Sikhs believe that irrespective of cast, creed, or religion we are all created equal." Pradeep (mom) adds, "While we prepare and serve the food we are in a constant state of prayer. We pray that the food fills all of the individual's needs, beyond just a nutritional need" explains mom, Pradeep. "As Sikhs, the main reason we wear this headgear is so that we are easily spotted in a crowd. So that anyone at any time can spot me and they should know I will lay down my life for their right to live, pray, eat, love...anything."

Atlanta Falcons Defensive End Gives Back at Hesed



After joining us at this year's Kentucky Derby Party, Adrian and Shannon Clayborn have taken an active role with us as new volunteers. "We had great time serving the guests at Hesed House. It's always important to give back to the community in any way possible. Hopefully we made someone's day a little brighter." Adrian, a defensive end for the Atlanta Falcons, calls Naperville home in the off season and he and his wife are very excited to be new members of our Hesed Community!



Adrian and Shannon Clayborn grilling with a guest this summer.

Counting Miracles: Successes from January 2017 – June 2017



TOTAL OF ALL 47 OUTCOMES
2214

TLC's Newest Resident and College Student

First stop Prom, next stop college as a TLC resident for Olivia.



Olivia in her new TLC room holding her former Highlights cover.

We are thrilled to share that Olivia (who you met on the cover of the last Highlights) starts college in the fall. She also is one of the newest residents in Hesed House's Transitional Living Community! "I am so grateful for the opportunities that Hesed House has provided me during this difficult time. I am grateful for everyone who makes this place possible for providing me with hope for my own future."



659 South River Street
Aurora, IL 60506-5551

THANK YOU! We are so thankful for the love and generosity of our donors, staff and volunteers. If you would like to learn more about how you can get involved, please contact Director of Development Michelle Hess at 630-897-2156 ext. 537 or donate@hesedhouse.org.

Upcoming Special Event

13th Annual Hike for Hesed

Saturday, September 16, 2017
9 am – 12 pm

Hike steps off from Hesed House. Walk alone or with a team of co-workers, family or friends through downtown Aurora to support the men, women and children who Hesed House serves daily.



Special thanks to our Platinum Sponsors:



For more information, please contact Carolyn Fairbanks, Associate Director of Development, at 630-897-2156 ext. 514 or cfairbanks@hesedhouse.org.

Thank you to everyone that made the 2017 Kentucky Derby Party our most successful event ever! A special thank you to the event's naming sponsors:



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