

HIGHLIGHTS

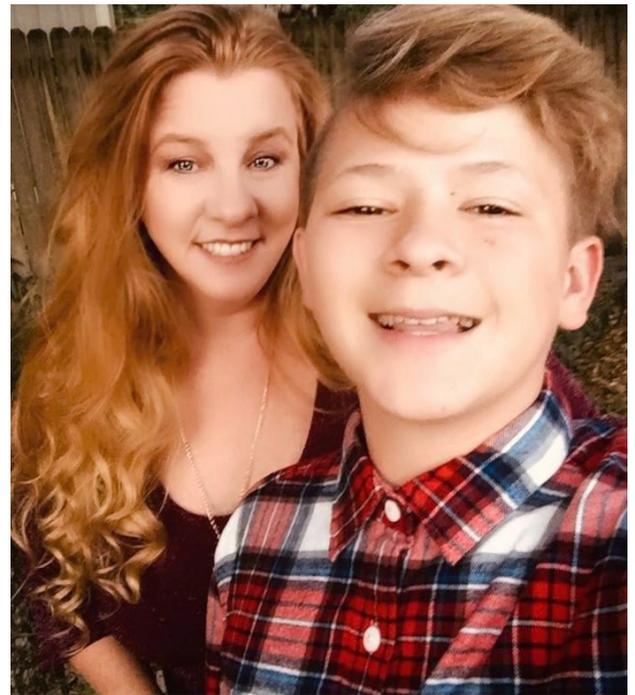
Five Years Housed and Still Doing Great!

Mother and son found support and care when they needed it most.

As the holidays were approaching in 2011, Clarissa found herself homeless. Instead of enjoying celebratory festivities, she was unhoused and caring for her seven-year-old son, River. She tried staying with a friend and other places until a liaison officer directed her to Hesed House, which changed their lives forever.

“When you stay [at Hesed House], you realize that this could be you, too.”

While in school, Clarissa had volunteered at Hesed House and never could have imagined she would find herself in the same situation as many of our guests. It wasn't until she came here as an adult that she was able to understand the needs we meet. “When you stay [at Hesed House], you realize that this could be you, too.”



Clarissa and River pose for a mother-son selfie.

The first night at Hesed House, she was mostly concerned about how her young son would handle it. They quickly found comfort in the volunteer and staff support surrounding them. For four months they stayed in the PADS Overnight Emergency Shelter, and then they moved into our former Transitional Living Community (TLC) program. She appreciates that Hesed House staff and volunteers treated them with dignity and respect. “I never felt like anyone was looking down on us. If anything, they made us feel special.”

After two years at Hesed House, Clarissa and River were able to get back out on their own and have recently celebrated their 5th anniversary of being housed! She has been at her current job for four years and credits many of the skills she's needed for her job were learned while at Hesed House. River just finished his freshman

year of high school and is quite the athlete, playing both football and travel soccer.

They know the incredible impact donors and volunteers have and Clarissa shares, “If Hesed House wasn't here, we would have been living in my truck. Thank you! If it wasn't for you, this place wouldn't be up and running!”

While at Hesed House, Clarissa visited a local farm and made a new friend.

Dear People of Hessed,

Sean put the bottle up to his lips, pausing slightly before tipping it back.

Immediately, the *Demons of Addiction* stopped their ever-present chatter in his ear. Like a pack of hyenas after the kill, they were busy climbing over one another to feast on Sean’s willpower.

Sean could describe the initial taste of the alcohol as “full-bodied with earthy tones... and notes of guilt.” The aftertaste was simple self-loathing.

There is no joy in relapse. It has none of the naughtiness of drinking in college, none of the exuberance of a 21’st birthday, none of the quiet satisfaction of a summer BBQ with neighbors. It is a contradictory combination of relief (as the body returns—chemically—to its altered sense of normalcy) mixed with deep shame.

After a few more sips, Sean began to wonder what people would think of him. Would they focus on his weakness? Or perhaps how he let everyone down? And, of course, Hessed House would abandon him, just like everyone else.

Except, Hessed House’s decision to stand by Sean was made thousands of years ago. Under an ink black sky, punctured by billions of stars—all of them visible before the invention of modern lights—someone scrawled out a path, a way. Simple in concept, difficult in practice, it calls us to radical hope.

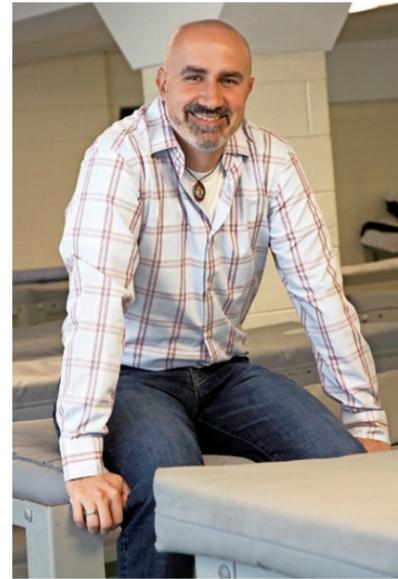
And that radical hope demands that we always believe that the human spirit is stronger than our brokenness. It also demands that we believe in the possibilities of miracles and our own responsibility to help bring them about. So, we will stand with Sean through this relapse. And if there is another, we will stand with him through that, too. And another... And another... By standing with Sean on his worst days, we earn the right to stand beside him on his best day. And that day is coming. Just not today.

The strength of the radical hope at Hessed House is a result of the community that rallies around this shared ethos of compassion and transformational service. You wouldn’t be reading this letter if you didn’t believe in miracles and your responsibility to help bring them about.

It is an honor to serve alongside you.

Peace,

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



“By standing with Sean on his worst days, we earn the right to stand beside him on his best day.”

Giving the Gift of Time After Loss

Dedicated volunteer finds joy through serving others at Hessed House.

Sharon Brummel had stepped away from volunteering at Hessed House to care for her husband. When he passed away in 2014, she found herself at a crossroads. No longer spending her days as a caregiver, she once again had capacity to fill needs in her community. Knowing the impact Hessed House makes, she reached back out to see how she could get involved.

“Hessed is my family.”

On January 4, 2015—her husband’s first birthday since he passed—Sharon returned to Hessed House as a volunteer.

Have you ever donated toiletries “stolen” from a hotel to give to Hessed House? If you have, Sharon probably sorted them! You will find her at Hessed House 4-5 days a week, organizing donations and engaging with our guests. Volunteering her time has allowed her to connect with others in a way that she never imagined. “Being at Hessed House gives me joy,” Sharon says. “Hessed is my family.”

To learn more about how you can give the gift of time, email volunteer@hessedhouse.org.



Sharon in the shelter “store”, working hard to meet the needs of the guests.

New Restaurant, But a Longtime Friend of Hessed House



Jersey Mike’s Subs franchise owner, Jim Shipman presents Hessed House staff with check.

Over a decade ago, small business owner Jim Shipman brought food from his restaurant to Hessed House and served the guests in our shelter. That moment stayed with him throughout the years. As the opening of his new business approached, he knew he wanted to reconnect and make a difference. During the first week of business, his newest Jersey Mike’s Subs location raised nearly \$3,000 through community donations. Employees were excited to be raising money for Hessed House, as many of them are personally involved with the work we do. Thank you to Jersey Mike’s and all of their costumers for choosing to support our neighbors in need!

Counting Miracles: Successes from January 2019 – June 2019



TOTAL OF ALL 47 OUTCOMES **807**

Doreen Gets a Second Chance in *The Harbor* (Permanent Supportive Housing)



Doreen taking on her next puzzle challenge.

After nearly a decade of homelessness, Doreen has a place to call home again! Thanks to your support, that home is in *The Harbor*, the onsite Permanent Supportive Housing program at Hesed House. She enjoys having her own private space and the ability to shop for her own groceries. A new joy is that she now has a hobby: putting together puzzles. Doreen wants to tell everyone who helps make *The Harbor* possible, "I'm grateful for those who have kind hearts. Without their generosity we wouldn't have a second chance." And just as every puzzle piece eventually finds its fit, Doreen has found hers.

Upcoming Special Events

15th Annual Hike for Hesed
Saturday, September 21, 2019
9 am - 12 pm



HIKE FOR HESED
15 YEARS WALKING FOR DIGNITY

Join us for this special anniversary Hike for Hesed as we celebrate 15 Years Walking for Dignity! Gather your friends, family, or coworkers for a walk along the Fox River. This non-competitive, family friendly walk helps support the men, women, and children that Hesed House serves daily. **Free registration** for individuals and teams is now open at events.hesedhouse.org/2019Hike.

Special thanks to our Presenting Sponsors:



For more information, please contact Rebecca Einhaus at 630-897-2156 ext. 535 or hike@hesedhouse.org.

Thank you to everyone who made the 2019 Derby Party a record breaking and successful event! A special thank you to our presenting sponsors Gerald Subaru of North Aurora and Scientel Solutions, and to all our sponsors. We hope you'll join us under the tent again next year!



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 the Development team at 630-914-6428 or donate@hesedhouse.org.

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