

HIGHLIGHTS

HESED HOUSE



This photograph was taken on June 17, 2020. Hesed House turned our warehouse area in the back of our Comprehensive Resource Center into an additional shelter. The tents were added to allow for better social distancing measures, as well as provide privacy for guests.

INSIDE

- "SHELTER IS HOPE"
- MOMENTS OF COVID

FALL 2020
Volume 32, Number 1



HESED
HOUSE

LEADERSHIP NOTES

When Joe told me this story, I knew I wanted to have him share it with you. These are challenging times, and we'll get through it together!

Ryan J. Dowd
Volunteer, Donor, & Executive Director



Have you ever seen hope leave someone's body?

I did on a scorching day in early June.
Worse yet – my words caused it to happen.

Sun blisters covered his face. His fingers showed fresh scrapes as he grasped the holes in the fence between us. He had a half-closed bruised left eye and blood on his shirt. He was jumped the night before.

The guys who beat him up took his book bag.

Inside was everything he owned, including his last \$27 dollars. Tears welled in his eyes as he asked me THE QUESTION, "can I stay here?"

"SHELTER IS HOPE"

I hesitated.

I knew my words were going to hurt him far more than the pounding fists the night before. *"I'm so sorry, we're under orders from the Health Department and Aurora to not let anyone else in."*

I saw the hope leave him as his head dropped and his body seemed to sink into itself. I gave him a tent, supplies, and food. It didn't help. As he walked down the driveway away from Hesed House, I pleaded with him to keep checking with us so he could move in as soon as we were allowed to open up.

A few weeks ago, after we were allowed to accept new people again, I saw him again as I served dinner in our shelter. Everything about him was different. He was smiling and gave a hearty laugh when I asked him if he was a Cubs fan (he was wearing a Sox hat and t-shirt). I watched as he enjoyed his meal, talking and laughing with other guests. His face was healed and, after his second helping of gyros and cucumber salad, his stomach was full. Our shelter is different than it was in June, too. Sure, we still have some restrictions to keep everyone safe, but we can take new people again.

As we continue our fight to ensure enough shelter space for the most vulnerable in Aurora, this story is more important than ever. I never want to tell someone he or she cannot stay here again.

Shelter to someone experiencing homelessness is so much more than a safe place to sleep and hot meal – shelter is hope.

- Joe Jackson, Managing Director



Vulnerable in the time of COVID-19

Because of you, Hesed House remains a critical shelter for those in need.

Marsha found herself facing homelessness for a second time as COVID-19 forced her company to downsize. This chaotic experience was even more stressful when paired with her current medical concerns. Marsha is thankful that Hesed House exists because "a lot of people don't have family to go to... You need a place to lay your head."

At the age of 14, she first battled Hodgkin's Lymphoma and continues to have serious health issues. After the pandemic hit, it was even more important she was proactive with her care.

"Everyone falls on hard times every now and then but you have to have the initiative to ask for help when you need it. Don't let your pride get in the way." With necessary surgeries now delayed, Hesed Staff worked with her each day. Counseling, arranging appointments, and obtaining essential medications were a few ways she was helped.

Reflecting on the social distancing the past few months, she shared, "It was a struggle because I'm used to getting up

and [going] to work." Continuing, she added, "I'm glad the guests got separated because a lot of [us] have underlying illnesses and that is keeping everyone safe."

We're happy to share that Marsha moved back out and into her own home last month! She's grateful for the fact she had a welcoming place when she needed it most. Thanks to your support, Hesed House will always be there for her and others in similar circumstances.

**"YOU NEED A PLACE TO
LAY YOUR HEAD."**



Marsha (middle) stands with staff outside the Hesed House Comprehensive Resource Center and temporary shelter in our warehouse.

Your support provides hope and healing through therapy

Therapist reflects on decades of working with children and families.

Natalie Brun was pleasantly surprised when recently opening her mail and she saw the envelope. To Natalie, it was much more than a beautiful wedding invitation. This invitation was a good reminder for her that at Hesed House, "we make an impact."

A former guest, who had lived at Hesed House as a child years ago, is now preparing for their upcoming nuptials. They remember the impact Natalie had on their life, wanting her to be with them to celebrate this occasion.

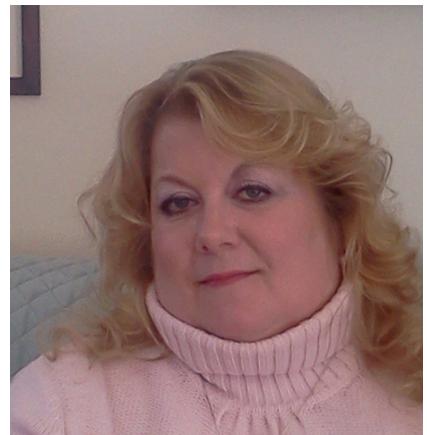
As a licensed Psychotherapist, Natalie has been a part of Hesed House for over 25 years. For children and families experiencing homelessness she offers vital support.

The tools she provides with our Family Shelter staff are even more needed during the pandemic. "There is also a grieving of what our life was like. Now it is very different." Her work is helping equip children to face the unknown, and deal with the isolation of remote learning while living in a shelter.

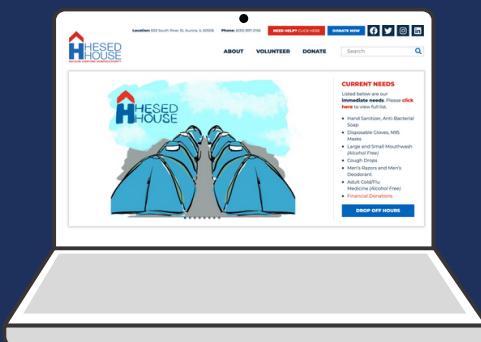
More than ever, she wants guests to know that "if you see me once you know I am always available...We are just there for [our guests] - I once had someone who moved out that said I am no longer homeless; I can't talk to you." Upon hearing that, she replied, "No, you are part of Hesed. You are always part of Hesed. We are there for you".

No matter the situation, guests know they have a place to talk through sorrows, traumas, and concerns. The healing process of therapy leads into hope and a new tomorrow, thanks to Natalie and each of you!

**"YOU ARE ALWAYS
A PART OF HESED.
WE ARE THERE
FOR YOU."**



Natalie Brun, L.C.P.C



**VISIT THE NEW AND IMPROVED
HESEDHOUSE.ORG**

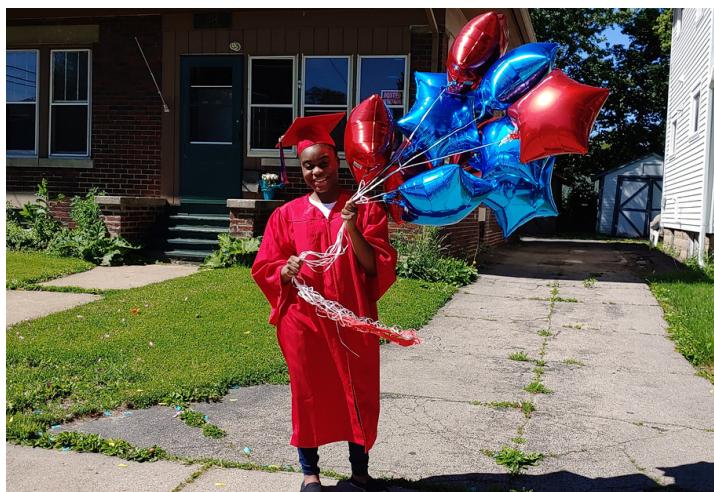
AN UNEXPECTED SUMMER

Volunteers, staff, and guests adjust to the new realities of COVID-19.

In March, our volunteer programs were halted overnight. We're grateful to the many groups and individuals who continue to bring much needed meals and toiletries to Hesed House. These donations and financial support allow us to make the best decisions for our guests, and we remain grateful for your amazing partnership in this time!



Above: Staff and National Guard at the "Hesed Hotel"
Right: Family Shelter Staff helps a young guest with her face mask



GRADUATION IN THE TIME OF COVID

Even through a pandemic, Hesed House staff made sure that special moments are still celebrated. When a former guest graduated from high school in May, Hesed House staff surprised the new graduate with a car parade. Her family may have moved out, but they remain a part of the #HesedFamily!

Congratulations to all the 2020 graduates!

SUPPORT HESED HOUSE IN STYLE

Our Bonfire Campaign lets you pick out the perfect fit while you make a difference!

Check out this special design made by
a Hesed House Family Shelter guest!



Want to help Hesed House end homelessness?

Visit bonfire.com/store/hesed-house to make an impact when you shop!

Celebrating Your Impact January 2020- August 2020

TOTAL TRACKED OUTCOMES: 649*



Obtained identification



Obtained Veteran's or other benefits



Resolved legal issues



Received assistance for security deposit, utilities and eviction



Successfully addressed mental health issues

33

39

6

292

6



Successfully addressed substance abuse issues



Successfully addressed medical issues



Obtained employment or job training



Improved Credit Score, Paid Down Debt or Learned Budgeting



Obtained housing

24

25

58

7

106

THANK YOU!

We are so grateful for the love and generosity of our donors, staff, and volunteers.

If you would like to learn more about how you can get involved, reach out to Lauren Jernigan, Division Director of Development at (630)914-6428 or donate@hesedhouse.org.

PUBLIC ACTION TO DELIVER SHELTER, INC.,
DBA HESED HOUSE IS A 501(C)(3) ORGANIZATION.
OUR EIN # IS 36-3285644.



659 S. River St, Aurora, IL 60506
hesedhouse.org

