



Haven House

Helping Lansing Area Families Help Themselves

WINTER 2010

FROM THE DIRECTOR

We are so proud to serve families

The other day a young man came into our office just to say “Hi” to us. Our office manager came to tell me that he was here and that he was an artist. I greeted the young man and knew that I knew his face but just couldn’t place his name. I asked



John Liddell, Jr.

him what his mother’s name is, because that is usually how I remember the families who come through here...by their parent’s name. When he told me, I literally squealed with joy!! The young man in front of me was John Liddell, Jr.

I was tickled pink to see him. You see, when John, his brother and mother stayed with us in 2006 and 2007, we were all impressed with this young man’s abilities. John was 16 when he stayed

with us, but he had the weight of the world on his back. His mom depended on him to be the man of the house. His brother, who is three years younger, is disabled. Mom took very good care of him and was motherly to him. But John was treated more like an adult.

The family had moved to the Lansing area from Saginaw. The neighborhood they had lived in was dangerous, and the boys did not feel safe, so mom thought it might be better here. John did not show much interest in school in Saginaw, got into a bit of trouble, and didn’t feel that he had much of a future. Because they had come from out of the area, the boys were enrolled in East Lansing schools. John really liked the school and was making friends and beginning to smile more often. We paid for both boys to attend the after-school program at Hannah Center so they had something to do after school until their mom came back from house hunting.

After leaving Haven House in 2006, John continued to catch the CATA bus every morning in Lansing in order to get to school in East Lansing. He did this for over a year. John would stop in now and then to say hello to the staff or to come in for dinner on occasion. He seemed to be left to his own will. When the family returned to us in 2007, John still seemed to have the weight of the world on his shoulders, but he had found an outlet. He began to write poetry and draw. He loved his art class, but missed it often because it was his first-hour class, and he was often late for school due to the long bus ride.

One day, John’s mother came to us and said that she was taking the boys to Indiana, and they were all going to live with an older sister. The staff here was devastated. All the hard work John had been doing



Angie Mayeaux



One of John’s pieces at Haven House.

See **Proud to serve** on page 5

Annual Have a Heart Campaign - Big Success!



We would like to thank all the businesses and community members for making our 10th Annual Have a Heart for the Homeless Campaign a success!! This year we had 17 businesses participate with us. The funds raised from this month-long event assist Haven House in providing shelter to families with children. The funds allow us to assist with transportation, provide intensive case management to each family and provide all of their personal needs while staying at the shelter.

A big THANK YOU to:

L & L Food Centers – all 8 locations • Corey’s • Threadbear Fiber Arts Studio • MESSA
Maurer’s Sanitary Cleaners • Student Book Store • Flap Jack – Frandor • Flap Jack – DeWitt
Great Lakes Capital Fund • Coffee Jam • East Lansing Food Co-op • AP Capital
Benson’s Vinaigrettes • Dalmatian’s Firehouse Grille • Woody’s Oasis – East Lansing
Woody’s Oasis – Okemos • Woody’s – Trowbridge • Breadsmith • Gone Wired Cafe
Champions Bar & Grill • MSU Women’s Basketball Coach Suzy Merchant

One Haven House family story

Sam, Natasha, and Natasha’s 2-year-old daughter Lana came to Haven House in early January. Natasha has partial hearing loss and a severe learning disorder, so Sam assists Natasha with all the paperwork. We were immediately impressed with this young couple’s work ethic; they immediately followed through with every referral we gave them. Sam began attending G.E.D. classes at Baker-Donora, finished his last test, and was working hard to find employment, but was having difficulty. Our staff referred him to the Good Works Program at Advent House, which assists its clients in gaining employment skills and finding employment, where he began attending regularly. Since Natasha received disability income as a child but not as an adult, we referred her to Jim at Advent House, who works through a special program that moves SSI/SSDI applications quickly through the system; however, they encountered setbacks. Sam and Natasha applied for DHS assistance

and were immediately denied, which occurs often. We were unable to tell them why their case was denied, and they re-applied for DHS assistance. Since it could take DHS 45 days to open their cash assistance case, the housing they had found could have been jeopardized. We spoke to Capital Area Community Services to see if they could assist with funding for housing. Sam and Natasha were in luck! Haven House was able to pay for their 1st month’s rent and security deposit through a grant received by the **R.E. Olds Foundation**, and CACS would be able to assist with rent the next month as a back up, if their DHS cash assistance case was not open yet. We are so happy for Sam, Natasha, and Lana as they have moved into their own home!! Haven House staff will continue to work with them in their new rental by assisting them with their educational, financial, and life skills goals that they have set for themselves, and we expect that they will be able to eventually live independently.

A Haven House hero volunteer inspires us all

Sandy Waltzer has been part of Haven House for close to 14 years. Sandy has quite a recent history, as her story demonstrates.

Sandy hired in as Haven House's deputy director in the mid 1990s. She maintained that position for a little over a year when she suffered a ruptured brain aneurism. Sandy jokingly recalls that she was shopping at the Gap when she collapsed in the fitting room. She once said she gave new meaning to the term "shop until you drop." She also got a pair of free jeans out of the incident but does not recommend this as a way to increase your wardrobe.

The next two years saw Sandy work to regain her ability to speak, read, walk and drive. She returned to Haven House as an office volunteer in 1998 for a period, but then left to work on other things.

In 2006 Sandy ran into our current deputy director at the store and was encouraged to come back and volunteer with us. Sandy did just that. She came back to us, and continues to volunteer two afternoons a week answering phones, assisting residents and bragging about her wonderful grandchildren. Sandy's determination to overcome adversity is inspiring. Her wit and wisdom bring a wonderful spirit to Haven House and demonstrate the miracle of the human spirit. We are all very thankful for Sandy and the time that she gives to us. Without volunteers like Sandy, Haven House could not run as efficiently as it does. THANK YOU, Sandy!!

If you would like to volunteer in the office at Haven House, please go to our website at www.havenhouseel.org and fill out a volunteer application, or you can call Maresa to set up a time to meet.

Paczki-Eating Contest supports Haven House

Haven House and L & L Food Centers teamed up this year for our Have a Heart for the Homeless Campaign, but we added a twist! This year, Martha Levandowski and I worked to put together a Paczki Eating Contest with local celebrities. The celebrities gave their time and their stomachs to us for a short period to raise much-needed funds for Haven House, and to bring more attention to the campaign.

*We would like to give a
big THANK YOU to:*

Jake Dunne, WLNS Meteorologist

Sheri Jones, WLNS Anchor

Tim Barron, 92.1 WQTX

Stan "The Grill Man" Levandowski, L & L Food Centers

Kathy Dunbar, Lansing City Council Member

Chief Tom Wibert, East Lansing Police Chief

Rob Stone, WITL

Mayor Vic Loomis, East Lansing



The winner by vote and the number of Paczkis eaten in two minutes was the honorable Chief Wibert. Tim Barron gives a nice round of applause to the Chief after having the lead taken away by just a bite in the last seconds of the competition.



Mother's Day & Father's Day cards feature artwork of children and supporters



We will once again offer cards for Mother's Day and Father's Day for a \$10 donation to Haven House. The card will state that a donation was made in the recipient's name to help homeless families. Cards can be sent to parents, aunts, uncles, friends, etc. **Mother's Day will be May 9**, and **Father's Day will be June 20** this year. The cards feature artwork donated by wonderful supporters of Haven House, along with artwork by Haven House children. Celeste Crouch has once again donated a water color for the Mother's Day cards. If you would like an order form, please go to our website at: www.Havenhouseel.org and order online, or call Maresa at 337-2731.

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Join us May 2 for Heart of a Spartan!

Help Haven House raise much-needed funds through this fun and active event. Champions for Charity has brought this

opportunity to mid-Michigan to raise funds for local nonprofits. Haven House is participating, and we NEED YOU!! **Heart of a Spartan Run/Walk** is an event designed to bring 10,000 runners and walkers into Lansing from across the country as well as to bring Lansing folks out to raise money for local nonprofits. Runners and walkers will have the unique opportunity to run through the tunnel, under the goal post and finish on the 50-yard line of the Spartan Stadium, while watching themselves on the Jumbotron!! We at Haven House invite you to help us raise much-needed funding by participating, not only as a runner, walker, wheeler or stroller, but also as a fundraiser.

All you need to do is register for the race at www.heartofaspartan.com then let our office know that you would like a fundraising packet, which we will supply to you. You may collect funds from your friends, family, neighbors, co-workers, doctor, dry cleaner, etc. Set a goal for yourself and let your contact know "I'm running the Heart of a Spartan for HAVEN HOUSE." If you have any questions, please call or email Angie Mayeaux.



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Proud to serve Continued from page 1

was going to be lost. They were going to move somewhere that was temporary, and would have to move again. Since the day this family left, John has been in my thoughts. He was a strong kid, but how much disappointment and pressure could one teen take? Well, John is an amazing kid. Before he left, he gave staff several drawings he had done in class. He told us we could keep them and one day when he was famous maybe we could auction them to help the shelter. Well, I would never auction those pieces, they mean too much to us. But, we did get the three drawings he gave us framed at no cost by Saper Galleries. They are beautiful and hanging in my office and the lobby. They are a reminder of talents that each person we meet has; you just may not know it right away.

John is doing great now! They did end up moving back to Saginaw and got a house that he and his mom have fixed up. He works at a local shoe store and continues to draw for fun and enjoyment. I told John how much I have worried about him since they left and how happy I was that he came to check in with us. He was amazed that we had *his* pictures hanging. He gave me a new drawing that he had done recently. It is a drawing of music mogul Jay-Z and is hanging in my office now.

We do what we do here at Haven House for families and kids like John. It is kids like him who worry us each day, but who also make us all so proud to have been a part of their lives. You just never know what impact that we may have on a child, a mom, or a dad. We are all proud to be a part of this organization and the families we serve.

***—Angie Mayeaux
Executive Director***

Wish list...

- Digital camera
- Brooms
- Dust pans
- Toilet bowl brushes
- Laundry soap
- Umbrellas
- Alarm clocks
- Socks—child & adult sizes

GRANTS RECEIVED

R.E. Olds Foundation

Haven House would like to thank the R.E. Olds Foundation for their generous gift of \$5,000. These funds will be used to assist in rapidly re-housing families who stay at Haven House. These funds will be used to assist residents with move-in costs such as security deposit, first month's rent or past utility bills in order to move into permanent housing. We are very grateful to the R.E. Olds Foundation for their support of Haven House and the families we serve.

Caring Neighbor Foundation

Haven House would like to thank the Caring Neighbor Foundation for their \$1,000 grant to us. These funds will be used to support the shelter and the over 100 families that we serve.



FEMA Funds

Haven House was awarded \$27,000 from the local FEMA board in February 2010. These funds will be used to rapidly re-house families staying at the shelter. The funds will be used for first month's rent and utility bills. These funds will enable families to move into permanent housing more rapidly and decrease the time they and their children have to stay in shelter.

We are grateful to Haven House's Circle of Friends...

who provide the funds so we can offer housing and services to homeless families. Below are the names of supporters whose donations were received between November 1, 2009, and January 31, 2010. Donations received after this date will be listed in the next newsletter. (We make every effort to include all donors. If we have omitted your name, please accept our apologies and give us a call so we can list your name in the next newsletter.)

Thanks also to all of you who have donated children's clothing, household supplies, food and other needs. We wish we had the space to list every one of you. We appreciate your help.

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