

# Where does my ➤ help come from?



2024

# A Letter from Our *Executive Director*

When women and children come to The Dwelling Place (TDP), they have no other options. They are desperate for help. Sometimes they need that help to *spare their lives*. In those moments of despair, they might ask themselves, “Where does my help come from? Does anyone care?” At TDP, we have the incredible honor to say, “We care, we are here to help, and we know the One who can heal your soul, the Maker of heaven and earth.”

My help comes  
from *the Lord*, the Maker  
of heaven and earth.

PSALM 121:2

Their time at TDP is not always easy, as they must learn to live on their own, heal from trauma, and grow as a person. But one thing is certain, no one leaves TDP the same. No matter the time they have with us, they are introduced to *their Helper*, as it says in Psalm 121, *the One who watches over them and stands beside them as a protective shade*. That will go with them wherever they go after TDP. We have seen so many women and

children’s lives transformed by the love of Jesus and set free from cycles of abuse. What a miracle!

2024 is already off to an amazing start. We finished the renovation of Ruth’s Place, and residents moved in this February. In the spring, we will begin renovations on Esther’s Place, our final home to be renovated. When completed, our capacity will increase to allow up to 8 more families to find freedom from abuse! Through this growth, we know the Lord will continue to provide TDP with amazing volunteers, donors, and staff. The Lord knows what we need, and He will always bring it to fulfillment in His time. What an honor to serve Him in this capacity. Thank you for doing your part in seeing this ministry thrive!

We hope the included stories glorify God and the way He tenderly cares for our residents, staff, and volunteers. He is writing beautiful stories, and we want to share some of them with you.



Gratefully,

*Jenna Perez*

Jenna Perez

## Psalm 121



I lift up my eyes to the mountains- where does my help come from?  
My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.  
He will not let your foot slip- he who watches over you will not slumber;  
indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.  
The Lord watches over you- the Lord is your shade at your right hand;  
the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night.  
The Lord will keep you from all harm- he will watch over your life;  
the Lord will watch over your coming and going  
both now and forevermore.



# TDP Leadership

## Mary's Story

“How did I get here?” thought Mary as she tucked her boys into bed at an emergency shelter. Mary had just fled from an abusive marriage of 15 years. “My religion kept me in the marriage, but my faith got me out,” she said. “He would use my Bible, show me where God hates divorce, and say ‘You can’t leave me.’” From a young age, Mary had believed in Jesus but did not fully receive him into her heart until she was 35. “When I grew in my faith, that’s when I was able to learn God’s truths, see things clearly, and gain the courage to leave.”

At the emergency shelter, Mary noticed another woman with her arm in a sling and stitches on her head. She thought, “I’m going to help other women when I get through this.” Mary was the sole income earner and knew she had the financial ability to leave her abuser while many women did not.

In 2023, Mary joined TDP’s board and now donates each month. “It’s a gift to be a part of women’s lives transforming through Christ,” she said. “At last night’s board meeting, we were reflecting on our budget. We talked about how it’s a combination of science, execution, and faith, but the bulk of it is our faith. That’s what I love. God shows up every time.”



## Marian's Meaning

One Sunday, Steve felt a nudge to respond to a presentation at church. The Dwelling Place needed help renovating homes, and he was a retired contractor. That simple nudge led to thousands of hours over the next decade building and renovating TDP homes. Today, Steve took a break from TDP’s latest renovation project, Ruth’s Place, and sat down in the living room. “When you become a volunteer, a part of you has to die,” said Steve. “Other people’s problems become more important than your own.”

He reminisced about all the projects over the years and the miracles that



took place. Stories of free HVAC systems and electrical work that would have totaled over \$40,000 but was completed at no cost. Then he started talking about the home that was finished in 2023. Steve said, “My wife and I heard they were hoping to find an ‘M’ name for the house, so we wrote to LeNae (former Executive Director of TDP) suggesting the name of Marian.” Marian was Steve’s mother, who passed in 2022. She loved The Dwelling Place and cared deeply about hospitality. “If she knew there was a house named after her, she’d be stopping by every week,” Steve said with a laugh. “She would put a piece of tape on everything she’d want me to fix.” He knows that she would love the beautiful home named in her honor.

Marian’s Place houses up to eight families and has a program space for classes and gatherings.

A woman named Nia moved into Marian’s on October 18, 2023. Fleeing from an abusive relationship of seven years, she was shocked to find out the name of her new home. “Marian was my mother’s name,” she said. “I knew in that moment that God had me here for a reason.” Nia lost her mom at the young age of 15 and now has her name tattooed on her arm. She said, “Living in a home called Marian’s makes me feel like I’ve got love all around me.”

One day after Nia moved in, on October 19, Steve’s great-grandchild was born. A little girl named Marian.

*For the safety of TDP residents, alumni, and staff, the resident name in this story was changed.*

# Gabriela's Rescue Story

Gabriela looked in the mirror and asked herself, "Is this really my life?" She had just lost her mother. The woman who set the standard of how she wanted to be loved. The woman who hadn't graduated middle school but wanted Gabriela to earn a degree. But a year after her mother passed, Gabriela wasn't in school. She was with a man who told her she was too stupid to go.

They started dating eight months after Gabriela's mother died. "He was smooth, let me tell you," she said. "I didn't know what it was going to be like dating with my two kids, but he seemed like a great father."

The first red flag came when she found a breathalyzer in his

car. "He told me it was a one-time mistake. He never drank around me, so I believed him."

They got engaged and had a child. He wanted to get married right away, but something inside Gabriela told her not to.

He started smelling of alcohol, and bottles were everywhere. Gabriela said, "I was afraid to accept the truth because you feel like a failure as a mom introducing your kids to an alcoholic." He told Gabriela she wasn't smart, a good mom, or doing enough around the house. He blamed his affairs on her unwillingness to do everything he wanted. Her whole life, she dreamed of education and breaking outside of her culture's expectations for women, but now she doubted herself.

Gabriela reached out to their families, but they brushed off his behavior and told her to work things out. Gabriela said, "I started to wonder who's out there that's going to help me."

After almost two years of abuse, Gabriela took her kids and left.



"I didn't want to leave because you think 'That's another child growing up without a father,' but I didn't want my kids to see him this way." After staying at an emergency shelter, she arrived at The Dwelling Place. "It was really hard at first," she said. "I was so scared, but I was welcomed with a lot of love and care."

At TDP, Gabriela found help. "These women understood," she said. "I don't know what getting out would have looked like without The Dwelling Place. He would have found a way to control me, and I wouldn't have been able to fight like I did." Gabriela diligently worked to heal from the trauma of emotional abuse and is now

a part of the TDP alumni community. Today, Gabriela is back in school, working towards an associate degree in healthcare management. She said, "I can see God saying, 'You see 'briela? I never fail you. I'm always there.'"

Now, Gabriela looks in the mirror, and her reflection is no longer full of questions. "I see me. I'm a woman that is strong, loving, and a good mom. Someone who's loved by God and many people. Even through the bumps in life, I can look at what I've already gone through and think there's nothing that I can't do."

*For the safety of TDP residents, alumni, and staff, the name and photo in this story have been changed.*



# He watches over us *by day and by night*

The Dwelling Place's five homes serve as residences for women and their children and program spaces. Take an inside look at how all the homes work together to create a healing environment for TDP families.

## RESIDENTIAL HOMES

### HOUSING

#### Safe Homes

Confidential home locations and security systems

#### Healing Spaces

Fully furnished houses with private bedrooms

#### Personal Care

Provided personal hygiene and cleaning products

### PROGRAM PHASES

#### 30-Day Program

Families move in and receive 1:1 case manager support. Serves as a trial period.

#### Phase 1 (6-12 months)

Women are in classes and recovery support full time to focus on healing.

#### Phase 2 (1-1.5 years)

Women search for employment or education opportunities, start working, and continue therapy and case work.

#### Phase 3 (3 months)

Women continue working and look for housing.

#### Graduation

Women graduate when they have a stable income, a plan for safe housing, and are not returning to their abuser.



RUTH'S



ESTHER'S



MARIAN'S



SANDY'S



LYDIA'S



MARIAN'S  
*program center*

### WOMEN'S PROGRAM

Our individualized support services to help women heal:

- › Case management
- › Bible study
- › Employment & housing advocacy
- › Personal finance, life skills, healthy living, and parenting classes
- › Recovery support in healing unhealthy coping patterns
- › Domestic abuse education courses
- › Individualized therapy with local mental health organizations

### CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

The children escaping abuse need protection, love, and age-sensitive care.

- › Support groups for emotional healing
- › After-school tutoring
- › Pre-K program
- › Teen program

### ALUMNI PROGRAM

We provide ongoing support for families after graduation to ensure sustained freedom from abuse.

- › Regular meetings and support group
- › Mentor program for the first year
- › Special events and activities

## PROGRAM SPACES



# He guards our *coming and going*

In 2022, Emily Edwards was having trouble selling her car. “I prayed about what to do, and I felt like I was supposed to donate the car to The Dwelling Place,” she said. Emily had learned about The Dwelling Place when its founder, Diane Stores, spoke at her Bible study.

One year later, her sister Maddie now works for TDP and uses the car every day. Maddie uses it to bring residents to work, appointments, the grocery store, or pick up kids. “Maddie will

send me fun pictures of her using it,” said Emily. “It’s cool that the car has reach beyond myself.”

Many TDP residents do not have driver’s licenses or cars, so this car is their main transportation. Without it, they couldn’t work or run errands outside their homes. “It gives me gratitude for everything donated to TDP because I know it’s people like Emily,” said Maddie. “It has inspired how I steward my things and shaped my mindset of giving.”



*Maddie and Emily with the car Emily donated to TDP.*

# 2024 WOMEN’S *gathering*

THURSDAY, MAY 16  
9:00 AM | 4:30 PM

*Redeemed Farm*



SCAN FOR TICKETS  
& EVENT DETAILS  
[tdpmn.org/gathering](https://tdpmn.org/gathering)



*- save the date -*

ANNUAL GALA  
THURSDAY, AUGUST 8