

Resident Story: Maria



I met my abuser when I was 16 and he was 26. We dated for a couple years and after that, we got engaged. Everything changed as soon as we got married. That is when the abuse started. He controlled everything, money, people I talked to and the way I dressed. Soon I stopped talking to my friends and family because no one was good enough to be around us. He used sarcasm and criticized everything I did. I took full responsibility for our baby because he was an absent father and an unsatisfied man; no one was enough. My son grew up around abuse and disrespect.

When my abuser exposed her to sexual content, that is when I decided to leave. She was 5 when this happened.

We escaped inside my best friend's car trunk with two backpacks, my daughter, and my faith. I knew that God had a good future for us.

spirit and soul. I understood what had happened to me. I received all the help that I needed to feel normal again. Little by little, the fear disappeared. I started a real relationship with God. I received the emotional and spiritual help that we needed.

I accomplished a lot in 2 years at TDP. I changed my name, got my US citizenship, got baptized, completed the divorce process, got my driver's license. A family donated a car for us, and I got the job of my dreams. I saved enough to buy a house.

I found my identity in Christ. I know that I am a child of God. It has been a long journey, now I can tell that I'm no longer afraid. I know that my Heavenly Father has me. I have a fresh start; my family and I have a second chance. We are living a Christian life.

After 2 months of living in an emergency shelter, I got in contact with The Dwelling Place (TDP). For the first time, I felt hope for our future. While we were at TDP, I had the opportunity to work on my

After 11 years, I had a beautiful baby girl.

I escaped inside my best friend's car trunk with two backpacks, my daughter, and my faith.

Every woman and child in our residential program has a unique story, but they all have the shared experience of a life shattered by abuse. Today, women in our program are learning about the love of Christ, and some for the very first time. God is restoring lives and giving hope to families, and we get the privilege of being a part of it.

If you would like to help provide hope to families at TDP, please give today!

GIVE TODAY!
GO TO [TDPNMN.ORG/GIVE](https://tdpnmn.org/give)
OR USE THE QR CODE



Wondering how your donation helps?

- \$1,000** provides one month of specialty classes for the women.
- \$500** provides one month of transportation for women to go grocery shopping and take children to school or daycare.
- \$250** provides weekly Bible study, support group, domestic violence awareness, and life skills classes to our women.
- \$100** provides one month of basic household supplies for one family.
- \$50** gives a welcome basket to each new family.



We want to be a part of the healing & redemptive journey of current and future women.

I GAVE TODAY TO THE DWELLING PLACE BECAUSE...



For the first time, I felt hope for our future. While we were at The Dwelling Place, I had the opportunity to work on my spirit and soul.

Read more of Maria's story inside.



SUMMER 2023

It's a big year, and we are celebrating!

This year, we celebrate 25 years of life transformation at The Dwelling Place! Back in 1998, we opened one single-family home in St. Paul. Today we have the equivalent of 10 single-family homes. God has been faithful to meet our needs over the years, and we continue to press into Him as we move into the next 25 years. Our goal is to continue to help families heal from abuse and fully step into who they were created to be.

It is hard to put a price on the value of home. Our prayer is that each of us have the safe and private space to simply be; where the reality of the stress, fear, and uncertainty starts to dissipate. For many of our residents, it's the first time in years they've slept through the night.

These spaces are where healing begins.

We have found that despite our creative efforts, our spaces were no longer adequate to deliver the level of care to our families that we know is necessary. We continue to receive more calls for help than what we have capacity for and our program space could not accommodate the growth in our children's program and alumni program. Maintenance and upgrades are needed on our older homes to meet not only our current needs, but to allow TDP to be sustainable long term, as well.

After years of planning, much prayer, and many hands, we are on our way towards meeting these needs!

This time last year, we broke ground on construction. Many of you joined in with other volunteers, business partners, and staff to work on the renovation and building project. Today, families are sleeping in the very homes our volunteers and donors helped provide.

We are eager to share more with you as the project progresses!

Steadfast The Campaign to Build and Sustain for Generations to Come.

In late 2021, we purchased a property to help us address these needs. This additional property, along with creative reworking of our current spaces, will allow us to enrich and expand our programs.

EXPANSION COST: \$1,437,000

1 ADDITIONAL RESIDENTIAL HOUSING MARIAN'S PLACE:

- Project includes: duplex purchase, renovations, handicap accessible entryway, furnishings, driveway, fence, and landscaping.
- This new home brings our potential capacity to 72 women and children by adding 10 bedrooms. As we continue to follow a trauma-informed care model, each family has their own bedroom(s) which greatly influences how many families will fit within the total 36 bedrooms available.

2 EXPANSION & ADDITION OF PROGRAM SPACE:

- Addition of 1,000 square feet of program space and accessory building.
- ♥ This space will include a kitchenette and restroom for more practical use and can be divided into two separate classroom spaces.

- ♥ Space for resident classes; support group, alumni gatherings, Bible study, Domestic Violence class, and other gatherings.

- ♥ Expanded space for the children's program for tutoring, play therapy, learning activities, and childcare. The space to appropriately separate children by age group.

- ♥ Climate controlled storage space in the accessory building to house basic needs supplies.

3 PROGRAM REPAIRS & UPDATES:

- Replace our Security System. The current monitoring system is not working properly, and we need additional cameras.
- Strengthen our IT system.
- Expand program staff to keep up with the growth.
- Create equity among all living spaces by making necessary repairs and updates to flooring, HVAC, appliances, and fixtures to older homes.

God is a God of the miraculous. He delights in removing the barriers to success in the women and children we serve. We, as staff, get to have a front row seat to watch this happen, but we couldn't do it without the generosity of our donors, partners, volunteers, and staff. Thank you!



A conversation with LeNae Williamson, TDP Executive Director and Diane Stores, Founder of The Dwelling Place.

LENAE: WHY DID YOU START THIS ORGANIZATION BACK IN 1998?

DIANE: Several times I looked for a safe place for my kids and I to go when we were fleeing abuse, but that was 45 years ago and there was nothing available where I lived. While on staff at Christian Recovery Center we had women coming to us often asking us for resources for Christ-centered shelters. **As I researched, I could not find a shelter that was focused on healing with Jesus and from trauma and abuse. God began to place within my heart the vision for The Dwelling Place.** He kept bringing me back to the scripture Isaiah 32:18, "My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest." It was what my heart had longed for and what these women's hearts were seeking. With fear and trembling I began to work on the non-profit in 1997 and opened the doors to the first women and children on October 1, 1998.

LENAE: HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE NEED THE DWELLING PLACE IS MEETING IN OUR COMMUNITY?

DIANE: I believe complete healing doesn't happen outside of the truth and hope Jesus brings. There are not many places where women and children can find a safe refuge which also understands the dynamics of abuse trauma and knows how to lead each one into the fullness of their true, God-given identity.

LENAE: HOW HAS TDP GROWN OR CHANGED OVER TIME?

DIANE: We started with one 5-bedroom home on the eastside of St. Paul. We could shelter 4 women and their children as one bedroom was used for overnight staff and office space. We had limited programming in the beginning but did offer support groups, prayer ministry and parenting classes. The Dwelling Place now offers these components and counseling, life skills, domestic violence class, and programs for the children.



Today, the organization can house up to 57 women and children and they are working to expand capacity.

LENAE: WHAT IS MOST ENCOURAGING TO YOU ABOUT WHAT TDP HAS BECOME TODAY?

DIANE: I am so grateful that TDP has stayed true to the original vision – providing a SAFE space for women and children to heal and grow. They haven't wavered from the call to stay Christ-centered and Holy Spirit led.

LENAE: HOW HAS THE LORD FULFILLED YOUR DREAM?

DIANE: I started The Dwelling Place feeling so uncertain and unqualified. The fact is – I was! However, God was just looking for the "yes" in my heart. **He's been so faithful over these 25 years to lead, provide, and protect. I think of all the women and children who have found safe harbor and healing at TDP and my heart is overwhelmed with joy and gratefulness.**

LENAE: DO YOU HAVE DREAMS FOR THE NEXT 25 YEARS FOR TDP?

DIANE: I'm excited to see all God will do in and through The Dwelling Place in the next 25 years. I have complete confidence that He will continue the good work He has started under the leadership of LeNae and the faithful staff He has called to The Dwelling Place. **I know generations have been and will continue to be impacted by the hope and healing women and children have found at The Dwelling Place.**

Fundraising Events

Women's Brunch

We had our first-ever Women's Brunch in May, and it was a huge success! We met so many wonderful ladies from all over the metro, and even some from as far as Chicago!



Redeemed Farm provided the perfect setting for a midday-getaway with friends. We are so grateful to our Presenting Sponsor, KTIS, who provided a photo booth for everyone to enjoy during the social time.

Lunch was provided by Lake Elmo Inn, and tables were set with gorgeous floral arrangements from Wild Glory Floral.

Laurel Bunker, keynote speaker, gave a truly inspiring message about the freedom of living with Jesus. We were blessed by one of TDP's recent graduates, Maria, and her mom, as she told the



story of her harrowing escape from her abuser in Mexico. This story of abuse is one that many experience all over the country and the world. You can read Maria's full story in this newsletter!

A huge THANK YOU to all of our generous sponsors, who helped make this a great event.

Photos from the event are available to view at tdpmn.org/brunch-gallery.

25 Year Anniversary Celebration Gala

SAVE THE DATE

August 17, 2023

Plan for an early summer evening of celebrating our 25 years, hearing stories of transformation, enjoying music from Jason Gray, along with dinner from CRAVE, and connections with friends.

Find registration and event information at tdpmn.org/gala