



The Dwelling Place

Shining Light with a Circle of Care

It doesn't take long for the light of Christ's love to provide safety and belonging for women and children who arrive at our homes. Within a week or two of coming to The Dwelling Place, women begin to share that they feel something completely different than what they were used to before.

As the light of Jesus shines brightly through our caring staff, women begin the journey through three important phases that we refer to as the "Circle of Care."

Phase One



Foundation of Healing

- ▶ Safety
- ▶ Peace
- ▶ Learning who God made them to be
- ▶ Parenting Skills
- ▶ Establishing goals

Phase One provides the foundation for healing to take place. Women establish goals with their Case Managers. They attend classes such as parenting, domestic violence education, Bible study and support group. They have time to think, pray and learn about who God has made them to be. Messages of darkness that were spoken over them and that they have believed are slowly replaced with messages of truth, peace, hope and joy. Soon, they begin to smile and laugh, and even dream again. Each phase of our program design includes healing steps for women and their children to address the trauma they have experienced due to their abuse. An important part of a mom's healing journey is knowing her children are getting the support they need.



"The day I was accepted into The Dwelling Place was the day I found out God still had plans for my life. The day we moved in, we were welcomed with open arms. All the ladies seemed so kind. It felt like such a relief to finally have a safe place to call home. From the minute we arrived, we were blessed with toys for the children, household items, personal care items, welcome gifts, and our own personal space. The staff also helped provide trips to the grocery store, the food shelf, and doctor appointments. I found it extremely helpful that The Dwelling Place also offered tutoring, support groups, and childcare for my kids as well. Everything that was provided for us was a true blessing. But the greatest blessing that I received while at The Dwelling Place was the opportunity to truly learn what great love God has shown us through Jesus. I discovered that even at the darkest times in my life, He still loved me. My relationship with God grew through the amazing groups offered at the Dwelling Place." (Excerpt from "Deborah's Story")

*Yet I am writing you a new command; its truth is seen in him and in you,
because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining. — 1 John 2:8*

Phase Two



Preserving Stability

- Job Stability
- Paying off Debt
- Housing Search
- Saving for moving out

During Phase Two, women overcome barriers that have held them back. Often, this might include working on their education or job skills, obtaining reliable transportation, support with childcare, and becoming employed with a livable wage job.

Every woman's story is unique. We walk alongside each woman to navigate the path forward. This phase is where they truly begin to see God's hand of provision in their lives and learn to trust Him with their most important needs.

"For someone who was degraded on almost a daily basis, being encouraged by the staff to set goals was greatly appreciated. Some of my personal goals were to get a job, find safe housing, and use the gifts God gave me to help others learn about Jesus. While at The Dwelling Place, I was hired at my first job in over 14 years. I want to set an example for my kids that when you have faith and trust in God and His Son, you can rise above the fear and prosper. I know I can handle being a single mom. I know I can help my kids through this because I am NOT fragile or weak. With God, I am strong." (Excerpt from "Deborah's Story")

Phase Three



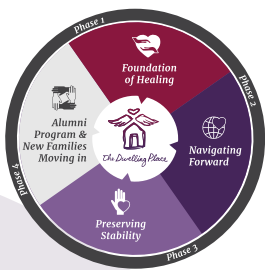
Navigating Forward

- Job skills & Education
- Driver's License & Car
- Childcare
- Obtaining a job

During Phase Three, women are becoming ready to launch out on their own. They have job stability, less debt, and are able to search for affordable housing as they save for their move. This is an exciting time for everyone because the joy and sense of accomplishment a woman feels when moving to her own home is tremendous!

Even during 2020, with pandemic concerns and civic unrest, a record-breaking number of women (14) were able to secure housing and successfully move forward from The Dwelling Place.

"I eventually moved out of The Dwelling Place and began renting a place for my family. I also serve in kids ministry, teaching elementary students about how Jesus can change lives. And I take part in the recovery program at my church. I still have hopes for securing my own home someday. I will always be grateful for everyone involved in The Dwelling Place. You had a part in blessing my family with a safe place to transition from a chaos-filled life to a blessed, purpose-filled life. You helped me see that God can turn any mess into a message, if you are willing to tell the story. I want to help others. I want to show them that others may knock you down, but God will be there to pick you back up. By telling my story, I want to help others hear how Jesus can find you in the darkest of places and bring you into His glorious light." (Excerpt from "Deborah's Story")



The Dwelling Place "Circle of Care" design brings women and children through a continuum of care so they are not only receiving safe shelter, but are being empowered through comprehensive services to heal from their trauma and become equipped to successfully break the generational cycle of abuse in their families and move towards a rewarding and meaningful life free from abuse.

Many women expressed a need for continued support after moving out on their own. For this reason, The Dwelling Place designed the Alumni Program to serve women and their families with a continuity of care after leaving our homes. This program sustains supportive and healthy relationships that offer encouragement and guidance so women will not need to return to old patterns and relationships to survive. By offering these services, women and their children remain connected to a network of caring staff and other Alumni, fostering a supportive community that is safe and recognizes challenges women face when living on their own. In addition, the Alumni Program provides a way for us to stay connected with our graduates, to learn more about what works well in the "Circle of Care" process, and to identify new ways to improve our services. The Alumni Program completes the "Circle of Care." This comprehensive model enables us to move toward the future with hope as we welcome new families who enter our homes and begin their journey to healing and a brighter future.

Note: The complete version of Deborah's Story is provided as a video on The Dwelling Place website.

Transitions and New Arrivals: Residents and Staff

Service Statistics as of November, 2020:

- 27 women and 34 children served (19 are moms)
- 14 women and their 22 children moved to homes of their own

We experienced God's protection and provision throughout this year and are very grateful for His care. Staff transitions brought new people to our team to serve in the important places of case management, children's program, and bookkeeping. We are grateful for each staff as they bring their skills and love for Christ to assist women and children in their healing process.



*Celeste Hoftede,
Children's Program
Coordinator*



*Gabrielle Heille,
Children's Program
Associate*



*Olabimpe Osoda,
Case Manager*



*Lynnae Thompson,
Case Manager*



*Kalena Guimond,
Bookkeeper*

The Volunteer of the Year Award



Finding ways to do things differently seems to be the sub-theme for 2020 and we found this to be true again with the presentation of the **6th Annual Karen Leverentz Volunteer of the Year Award** (previously awarded during our annual Gala).

During their September meeting, The Dwelling Place Board of Directors joined "virtually" through Zoom with Linda Wiza and Paul Leverentz to present this award to **Sue Bro** in Sandy's Place garage (now affectionately known as "Sue's Garage"!)

Following the 2017 Gala (when she first learned about The Dwelling Place), Sue began volunteering when renovation work began on Esther's Place. Her first volunteer tasks included breaking out walls and hauling concrete out of the basement with a team of volunteers.



Since then, Sue has become the steady House Maintenance Manager, a volunteer role that fills her with joy as she cares for each house by keeping them in good repair. We thank God for Sue, her energy, abilities, and positive spirit! Congratulations, Sue!

Moving Forward with Gratitude & Anticipation



Phillipians 1:2-5 Grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank God in all my remembrance of you. In every prayer of mine I always make my entreaty and petition for you all with joy. I thank my God for your partnership in advancing the good news from the first day until now.

In this Thanksgiving season, I reflect on all of the good things God has done in this most unusual year of 2020! He faithfully provided for The Dwelling Place in the midst of government shutdowns, massive layoffs, and a global pandemic. He protected our staff, residents, children and volunteers from COVID-19. He provided highly skilled, committed, educated, and passionate staff who walk with each woman and child to reach goals for healing and restoration. He opened the door for me to serve The Dwelling Place and He is faithfully guiding Linda Wiza and I during this transition period.

December 10, 2020 will be Linda Wiza's final "official day" at The Dwelling Place. Her heart, vision and tireless service have truly blessed The Dwelling Place. I know this has been a labor of love for her and it is most certainly a job well done! I am so thankful for her support in the transition process. We welcome and encourage you to drop her a note of appreciation and well wishes!

We gratefully celebrate the accomplishments of our residents and team this year! Incredibly, fourteen women (along with 22 children) graduated from our program and moved to homes of their own. Traditionally, finding affordable housing has been one of the largest hurdles to overcome and our only explanation is **"The Lord provided!"** It is personally exciting for me to begin this new journey with women and families who recently moved into the homes (six women arrived in September/October and we anticipate more will join us before 2021).

Our Alumni Program is navigating ways to connect with alumni while recognizing the challenges of the pandemic. Praise God for technology (such as Zoom) to provide ways to meet with staff, other alumni, and to ensure meaningful connections continue with mentors. Please pray for creativity and opportunities to support and engage with former residents for their continued success.

Along with our board of directors, I am excited to launch a strategic planning process to discover God's plans for a new season of growth and direction for The Dwelling Place. This is our goal for the first months of 2021. We welcome your prayers as we move forward.

May you and those you love enjoy this wonderful season of Thanksgiving! Thank you for your support and partnership with The Dwelling Place ministry. I would love to meet you soon and learn more about you! Please call to ask questions or schedule a meeting (in person or virtually).

Blessings Always in Christ Jesus,

LeNae Williamson, Executive Director

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