



SHELTER SEASON 2015-2016  
WWW.BEDS-PLUS.ORG

# THE BEDS PLUS NEWSLETTER

Dear Volunteers and Supporters of BEDS Plus:

For 27 years, local churches, community activists and engaged volunteers have worked to protect the homeless individuals in our neighborhoods. A safety web of temporary housing and hot meals has been BEDS Plus first line of intervention. Hundreds of individuals have provided this security for folks in crisis. Some nights, it is life-saving.

The second arm of our mission is to coordinate social services for those who seek our assistance. Many clients are referred from local schools, churches or governmental units. A highly qualified staff has shouldered these case management services at our Daytime Support Center. They refer clients to appropriate resources, retrieve governmental benefits that have been lost, and facilitate medical and mental health referrals.

The newest strategy of BEDS Plus is to intervene before homelessness is a reality. Divorce, illness, foreclosure and poverty are just a few of the factors that take families from their homes. Stabilization prevents a freefall. Rent subsidies, relocation, and temporary placements are negotiated by our Housing Case Manager.

Your donations have allowed us to serve these three missions. Your work has provided manpower. And yet, we still see people in our communities struggling with homelessness. Why?

The reality is that the only cure for homelessness is a home. It is that simple.

Drifting day to day saps the emotional and physical energy of a person in crisis. The transient life does not enable our clients to address the serious issues that must be addressed: PTSD, physical afflictions, mental health challenges, substance abuse temptations. What is needed is the stability of four walls, and the gifts that a home provides: safety, support, ritual, hygiene, health and community.

This is the next challenge for BEDS Plus. We have taken our first steps.

With the assistance of local government officials and agencies, the stout encouragement of

our faith partners, and just a dash of dreaming, we have dared to plan a facility to provide 20 units of Permanent Supportive Housing with integrated oversight and support.

20 homes. 20 lives transformed.

Studies have illustrated that even the most fragile members of the homeless population can reclaim autonomy if they have a stable address. We hope to provide this lifeline, and expect that some clients will return to the workforce, reunite with families, and overcome obstacles.

We now own the projected site at 9601 Ogden Avenue. We have enlisted a team of developers to provide for the blueprint and the functionality of the space. Our zoning application was approved, and the LaGrange Board of Trustees has supported the plan. We have vaulted over hurdles, and worked diligently to inform the public about the benefits we will be able to provide. Speed bumps remain, but with the energy of our core supporters, we are aiming to overcome the obstacles and break ground next year.

We are undertaking a Capital Campaign to fund our obligations, and we welcome all interested individuals to help us make this vision a reality. We will not step back one inch from our current commitment to the nightly shelters and case management. We expect that the Permanent Supportive Housing will ultimately reduce the numbers of visitors in our shelters: that is an additional goal.

Please know that we appreciate your robust support. It has allowed BEDS Plus to be a lifeline in this community. Your spirited enthusiasm carried us through harrowing hearings and challenges. We need you. We thank you. Visit our website at [www.beds-plus.org](http://www.beds-plus.org) to view the latest news about 9601 Ogden, sign up for updates, volunteer or donate. Walk with us. Together we can do so much. We look forward to working with you.

Janet Dahl  
Secretary, Board of Directors  
BEDS Plus



## A MESSAGE FROM BEDS PLUS BOARD SECRETARY, JANET DAHL

*"The reality is that the only cure  
for homelessness is a home.  
It is that simple."*

## SPOTLIGHT ON FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAMS

### *How are families being cared for at BEDS?*

When a new client is introduced to us through a community partner or walks into the BEDS support center, staff begins the process of assessing the needs of the entire household. Our number one goal is housing stability, but we are also concerned with all aspects of each family member. This means that we are looking at the family's healthcare, childcare, education, employment, and basic needs.

### *What do families need the most?*

Families typically arrive in financial crisis. Through directed conversation with our case managers, many parents are able to assist us in uncovering needs that go beyond financial assistance. We can find out quickly if they are connected to any other agencies for childcare, healthcare, benefits assistance, or employment. It is not uncommon to hear from our families that they were unaware of that certain resources are available. We make it our job to coordinate holistic care with the services that we offer at BEDS and with other agencies beyond our walls.

### *Who is working with families at BEDS?*

All our staff are involved with family cases. Joann Boblick coordinates healthcare; Bruce Malak attends to issues of mental health and coordinates services with the many agencies where he has long-standing, professional connections; Ben Pershey assists with job searches and accessing home-

lessness prevention; Jim Gilbert meets with those individuals who are experiencing addiction issues; and the BEDS administrative staff processes necessary paperwork for financial assistance. In addition to our dedicated employees, we have excellent volunteers who are essential in improving the lives of these families. Gloria Fryzel, with her extensive background working with families, visits them in their homes, assesses their needs and spends time getting to really know the circumstances. Families have come to know that Gloria is trustworthy and responsive when it comes to getting their situation turned around.

### *Can you share a recent success?*

A family came to us after being referred by St. Vincent DePaul at St. Cletus in LaGrange. The mother has worked for the same employer for almost two decades in Countryside. A devastating domestic violence situation altered the family into a single parent household with less income. After reviewing the new childcare plan and documenting that the mother would be able to pay rent going forward, BEDS was able to access one-time rental assistance to help them avoid late fees and possible eviction.

*Family Support is made possible in part by generous awards from The Chicago Community Trust, The Blowitz-Ridgeway Foundation and The Community Memorial Foundation.*



*"It's been a privilege and an honor to serve BEDS for almost 10 years now. I'm always prayerful that the little bit of work we do to provide meals for the people we serve can really make a difference and encourage the hearts of those in need. To love thy neighbor as thyself is to always be willing to give and help no matter who they are or the situation."*

KELLI WILLIAMS-PERKINS  
2nd Wednesday Cook Team

## INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING?

BEDS Plus has opportunities available at the shelter, daytime support center and in other support roles in the office. The collective impact of the volunteers at BEDS Plus is nearly \$400,000 in labor costs per year. BEDS Plus is a network of people working to make the mission a reality. Please consider volunteering this year. Your next step is to attend a volunteer orientation. Details are listed on our website or call 708-354-0858.

## SHELTER UPDATES

BEDS has made a few changes pertaining to our shelters. We have relocated our Friday night shelter site from First Baptist in La Grange to St. Barbara in Brookfield. We are thrilled to welcome St. Barbara to our shelter rotation, and would like to thank First Baptist for their dedicated and generous service over the years.

Beginning in 2014, we lengthened our shelter season. Our shelters now operate from October 1<sup>st</sup> through May 15<sup>th</sup>. We were pleased to welcome local groups and organizations to our monthly rotation of volunteers. From serving meals, to conversing with clients, to watching over the shelter in the wee hours of the morning, we greatly appreciate your service!

As a new shelter season approaches, we say goodbye to two veteran site coordinators, Ted Corlett and Tony Kassel. Thank you for your late nights, flexibility, and loving nature. We'd like to welcome Sam Frank as our new Thursday night site coordinator and Dan Parcel as our new Friday night site coordinator. As veteran volunteers, we know our clients and volunteers are in good hands with you!



## CLIENT SUCCESS STORIES

### MEET THERESA

After experiencing the loss of family at an early age, Theresa is finally home. Housing was sporadic for Theresa and as a result, has been in and out of shelters for over a decade. She had difficulty completing her education and keeping any employment. Her physical and mental health became complicated.

Theresa came to BEDS Plus for shelter in January of 2015. Staff helped Theresa connect with a caseworker at Pillars for mental health care services. Over time, Theresa opened up to her Pillars caseworker and the staff at BEDS. These relationships would prove invaluable when a permanent supportive housing apartment became available for Theresa just a few months later through a partner agency.

In June 2015, Theresa signed a lease for a one-bedroom apartment and moved to the south suburbs. She is enrolled in a supportive employment program and will continue to receive ongoing counseling with a therapist. A case manager from a partner agency will visit her weekly and she will have periodic visits from a BEDS Plus case manager. This will help her improve her life skills and one day, achieve independent living.



On behalf of the Soup & Bread Event Committee, I'd like to extend a gracious "thank you" to everyone who contributed to last January's event. This was my first year working on the committee and I'm proud to have been a part of the event. As an LT graduate and current teacher in La Grange, I've spent time with many dedicated community members over the years. Soup & Bread is definitely an example of dedication and community at its best. A productive collaboration of restaurants, breweries, volunteers, and over 300 community members helped raise over \$40,000 for BEDS Plus in one night.



The third-year event continued to evolve with new restaurants and, for the first time, a beer tasting by Buckledown Brewery, Imperial Oak Brewery, and Lunar Brewing. It was a great combination of locally made soup, bread, beer, and music that turned the William Tell into a memorable fundraiser.

### PSH UPDATE

Plans are taking shape for our new BEDS Plus facility at 9601 W. Ogden Avenue. Although we have had challenges along the way, we are confident in our ability to see this project through to fruition. To that end, we will be hosting a series of events this fall. Our goal is to educate and inspire as many friends and community members as possible. Please let us know if you would like to attend one of these events – or if

you would be willing to host one of your own. We promise to make it easy and fun!

For more information, call or email Tina Rounds. Tina can be reached at 708-354-0858 ext. 5 or via email at [rounds@beds-plus.org](mailto:rounds@beds-plus.org)

We are grateful for your continued support.

The following restaurants donated delicious soup, most of which was gone before the crowd was: Standard Market, Davanti Enoteca, Kama Bistro, La Buona Vita, Mattone Restaurant, Mecenat, Nickson's Eatery, Salerno's Pizzeria, Sweet Tomatoes, Wild Monk, William Tell, and Whole Foods. Alongside Turano bread, the variety of soups made it hard to choose which one to sample next.

This **January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2016** will be the fourth Soup & Bread fundraiser and it has evolved into the most important fundraising event for BEDS Plus. I look forward to seeing you at William Tell to share another great day of food and charity.

Respectfully,

Steve Driscoll  
Soup & Bread Committee Member

### SHOPPING ONLINE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON?

Consider participating in the AmazonSmile program where .5% of your purchase will be donated to BEDS Plus.

Visit <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/36-3741040> for more information.





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“BEDS HAS ALWAYS BEEN A SPECIAL PART OF THE COMMUNITY. GROWING UP IN LAGRANGE PARK, BEDS TAUGHT ME THE IMPORTANCE OF COMPASSION AND OF SUPPORTING ONE ANOTHER THROUGH HARDSHIP. I BELIEVE IT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY, BOTH INDIVIDUALLY AND COLLECTIVELY, TO EMBRACE DIVERSITY AND BE OF ASSISTANCE TO THOSE IN NEED.”

CAITLIN HILLSMAN  
Associates Board Member

## PROGRAM IMPACT

*Data is for July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015*

\$91,685.24: Number of dollars in direct financial assistance provided to clients for housing, employment or medical expenses

2,477: Number of donated meals given to clients last year

6,759: Total number of emergency shelter nights provided to homeless individuals and families\*

227: Nights of emergency overnight shelter provided

616: Number of clients working with BEDS Plus

139: Number of children assisted

289: Clients who obtained new housing or remained housed due to the agency’s support

138: Number of clients who increased their income through new employment opportunities

*\*number of individuals who were sheltered by the number of nights they received shelter*



OUR MISSION IS TO HELP VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS STABILIZE THEIR LIVES THROUGH HOUSING AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES.