

APRIL 2023



## Housing Hope

Home Sweet Home Ministries is always seeking new and innovative approaches that instill hope, restore lives, and build community. Back in the fall of 2022, Home Sweet Home Ministries embarked on a new journey—becoming a landlord.

“In response to the housing crisis and lack of affordable housing in our community, we began the process of obtaining a property that we could rent to families at affordable rates,” shares Steve Tassio, Home Sweet Home Ministries’ Director of Community Outreach. “Although a small start, it felt necessary and timely to own a property where we could remove many of the barriers that keep people from safe and adequate housing opportunities.”

In September, Home Sweet Home purchased a duplex located on South Adelaide in Normal. The property consists of two rental units, a 2-bedroom apartment and a 4-bedroom apartment. “In just 3 short months, the duplex went from outdated, dirty, and in disrepair to a fantastic property for new tenants to call home,” explains Steve.

There were a lot of moving parts, coordination, and labor that went into making this happen so quickly. Staff, volunteers, contractors, and other agencies helped complete significant renovations including adding a new roof, new flooring, and painting. While the new duplex was starting to take shape, Steve and fellow staff members tasked themselves with finding our first tenants.

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## MISSION STATEMENT

**Home Sweet Home Ministries demonstrates Christ’s love through innovative approaches that instill hope, restore lives, and build community.**



## A Message from Matt

*“How precious is your unfailing love, O God!  
All humanity finds shelter in the shadow of your wings.”*

– Psalm 36:7

Our community is facing a crisis when it comes to the availability of affordable housing. It seems no one is unaffected by the lack of available homes to purchase or apartments to rent. For the households we serve, who fall in lower socioeconomic levels of income, the impact is profound. As we work to support them in finding their way back into stable housing, we find that rents, security deposits, and credit score & income requirements have all increased dramatically over the past couple years. While we continue to faithfully offer shelter and other supportive services, we’ve seen these increases compound the already difficult journey for so many as they seek to leave homelessness behind.

In response to these challenges, late last year HSHM’s Board of Directors approved the purchase of a duplex property, opening the door for our ministry to directly offer safe, affordable, and perhaps most importantly – *permanent* – housing directly in our community. While we know there is still a need for much more housing like this, all of us at Home Sweet Home Ministries are excited about this new step in helping our neighbors find the stability and security that comes with having a home to call their own.

I pray that you are encouraged as you read through this issue of our newsletter. May God bless you all for your faithful support of our ministry.

*Matt Burgess*

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## Driving Others Forward

Through Night In A Car, everyone at Home Sweet Home understands the power of generosity and compassion. On February 3rd, around 180 participants braved the cold to raise awareness for those experiencing homelessness by spending the overnight hours in their cars. During the event, participants were provided a glimpse into the struggles that many in our community can face. Kimberly, a former resident of Home Sweet Home shared her story.

*“You guys opened up the doors. It’s just been a blessing. Everybody on this staff has been wonderful to me. You have been understanding and letting me know that it is okay to cry. We lost everything we have, but God is amazing and I’ve felt Him in this place and in every staff member that I’ve dealt with,”* praises Kimberly.

With encouragement and counseling, Kimberly successfully found a new home for herself and her daughter. Donors like you play a significant part in making stories like Kimberly’s a reality for so many others.

HSHM is happy to share that Night in a Car raised over \$153,000 this year! Thank you to all of our participants, sponsors, donors, and volunteers that helped make the night a success. Because of your efforts, more work can be done to support our neighbors in need. Thank You!



*Follow Us!*

**Follow us on Instagram  
@hshministries**

# Caring Neighbors

Home Sweet Home seeks to provide a safe place for struggling individuals and families to find refuge and renewal. A warm place to rest, delicious food to share, and a chance at a fresh start—all of these things are only possible through the generous support of our donors like you.

Here are a few ways that our neighbors have helped those in need:

- Pizza Payaa donated 30 delicious pizzas for residents to enjoy on National Pizza Day. Yum!
- Fleet Fleet Bloomington hosted their 9th annual Run For Hope to benefit HSHM.
- PrairiErth Farm supplied our co-op with several pounds of carrots, potatoes, turnips, and beets.
- Jim's Steakhouse donated 500 pounds of ground beef to our kitchen staff.

No matter how you choose to support HSHM, you are making a significant impact on those we help. For more ways to give, please visit [hshministries.org](http://hshministries.org) and click on 'Ways To Give' tab. Thank you so much!



## Thank You, Volunteers!

April is Volunteer Appreciation month and all of us at Home Sweet Home wanted to thank you for your dedicated service. Every day is a day for us to celebrate and appreciate volunteers at HSHM. Last year 1,070 volunteers helped in our dining center, co-op, and The Junction. We are also grateful to all those that help with construction and painting projects at the shelter. No matter your role, your help is immeasurable. Thank you so much for devoting your time and efforts to our ministry.

Are you looking to get more involved? Check out all of our amazing opportunities to serve by visiting [hshministries.org](http://hshministries.org) and clicking on the 'Volunteer' tab. Your help truly makes a difference.



Like us on Facebook  
Home Sweet Home Ministries

Like Us!



# Join Our Family

Home Sweet Home Ministries is hiring! For over a century, Home Sweet Home Ministries has stood as a pillar of the community and a beacon of Christ's love for the hungry, homeless, and hopeless here in Central

Illinois. It is the mission of every member of our staff and our volunteers to demonstrate Christ's love through innovative approaches that instill hope, restore lives, and build community. Now you, too, can help build upon our traditions and contribute your passion for caring for others and your desire to be a guiding light for Christ's love to those caught in the storm by joining our dedicated team.

If you or someone you know may be interested, we encourage you to check out our current listings at [hshministries.org](http://hshministries.org) and clicking on the 'Current Openings' tab. We look forward to meeting you!



## Current Needs

Your support means so much. With your help, Home Sweet Home is able to comfort and nourish the men, women, and children seeking renewal. Please kindly consider collecting the following items:

- Bottled Water
- Individual Bags of Chips
- Coffee
- Napkins
- Toothpaste
- Body Wash
- Wash cloths

Donations can be dropped off at the Bread For Life Food Co-op at 301 East Oakland Avenue in Bloomington. Be sure to check out [hshministries.org](http://hshministries.org) and click on the "Ways to Give" tab for updated needs. Thank you so much for your help!

## Housing Hope

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"We met with one of our church partners who connected us with a unique family not only suffering from homelessness but also fleeing from Ukraine," explains Steve. "The family had left their home, relocated to our town, and were dealing with that sense of dislocation in the most literal sense."

By mid-December, this Ukrainian extended family of seven, finally had a place to call home. "By the Grace of God, we were able to offer the duplex to our Ukrainian neighbors and create an affordable lease with their unique family makeup and circumstances," shares Steve. "This displaced family may never get their home back in Ukraine, but they can now be together in a place of their own with the support of HSHM and our community partners."

With your continued support, Home Sweet Home looks forward to restoring even more lives and helping more families find a new home.



"I hope the family begins to experience enough peace in the new place that they can plant some new roots here in town and establish relationships and connections," shares Steve. "I hope the duplex is the start of a new restorative offering that Home Sweet Home can grow upon to combat homelessness."

## Join Us In Prayer

As Home Sweet Home strives to help others in our community, we kindly ask your help in praying for:

- individuals, families, and Veterans searching for new opportunities.
- our families and church partners involved with our duplex on Adelaide.
- our food source providers, including local restaurants and grocery stores.
- the health and safety of volunteers who devote their time in our shelter.
- all those in our community in need of comfort and hope.

Thank you for surrounding us in prayer. God Bless!