

OCTOBER 2023



Last December, Home Sweet Home Ministries developed a new way for families experiencing homelessness to provide gifts for their children at Christmas. With your support, we look forward to inspiring that sense of independence and hope once more.

“Our goal was to avoid just giving out items. We created a concept where we empowered parents with the opportunity to do something for themselves to earn points to shop for gifts for their children,” explains Steve Tassio, HSHM’s Director of Community Outreach.

Participating parents could earn points by completing various tasks at Home Sweet Home including cleaning, washing dishes, or sorting items at the co-op. For every hour worked, they would receive 10 points, with the option to accumulate up to 200 points. Parents could then exchange those points to shop for gifts.

“It was very successful,” adds Steve. “We had 20 parents in total from the shelter, co-op, and Milestones participate.”

Volunteers from Eastview Christian Church helped transform The Junction into a winter wonderland. Beautiful decorations glimmered from every corner. Tables were overflowing with a variety of toys and games ranging from 2 to 20 points. Parents could even indulge in a comforting cup of cocoa at the hot chocolate bar.

*continued on page 4*



## 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

*“God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.”*

– 1st Peter 4:10

Throughout our 106 year history, our community has given life to this imperative about stewarding the gifts God gives us by being involved at Home Sweet Home Ministries. Our earliest records contain pictures of the community coming together to organize banquets, provide clothing, offer prayer, donate food, and conduct Sunday school services. Today our pictures show our neighbors helping us serve meals, host Thanksgiving and Christmas events, and providing opportunities to connect with one another.

It truly takes all our gifts to support people as they journey back into housing and restored community. Regardless of your particular set of gifts, I’m confident you’d find a use for them here. As you read through this issue of our newsletter, I encourage you to reflect on the ways you might use the gifts that God has given you to be in service to others. And as you consider this, won’t you reach out to us to explore those ideas? I believe you will find, as I have, that you’ll be blessed by your involvement at Home Sweet Home.

May God bless you all for your faithful support of our ministry.

*Matt Burgess*

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## Hopeless to Healing

Amid battling serious health issues and homelessness, Brady decided it was time for a change. Last October, Brady reached out to Home Sweet Home for support. HSHM staff surrounded him in comfort and prayer. He gained confidence as staff and other residents kept speaking hope into him.

With guidance and strength, Brady managed to navigate his health journey. “I slowly opened up and got the right help from staff and even from the people staying here. I finally got my health on track and had a number of surgeries. I’m finally feeling better about myself.”

Brady was also willing to take on more responsibility and learned to be kinder to others. “When you are in good company, and do good things, good things tend to happen,” says Brady. “I have made positive changes in myself.”

After lots of time to recover and heal, Brady was finally able to seek employment again. He got a job and started saving every penny he could. His hard work has paid off and he now has a new apartment to call his own. He continues to work, keeps on his finances, and is even seeing his family again. “Home Sweet Home Ministries truly cared for me. They helped me gain my life back.”

## Prayer Support

As Home Sweet Home continues to nurture and comfort individuals and families this fall, we kindly ask your help in praying for:

- individuals, families, and Veterans seeking refuge and renewal.
- the community members and churches involved with Give Thanks distribution.
- the Bread For Life Food Co-op and its members.
- the new connections and relationships created at The Junction.
- the continued development of our Rapid Rehousing program.
- our food source providers, including local restaurants and grocery stores.
- our volunteers, clients, and staff who devote their time to help others.

Your prayers are truly appreciated. Thank you for lifting up Home Sweet Home.

*Join Us!*

**Night In A Car, February 2nd, 2024**  
**Sign up now! [www.nightinacar.org](http://www.nightinacar.org)**



# Help Support Give Thanks

Home Sweet Home Ministries, Midwest Food Bank, and Thrivent Financial need your help! We kindly ask for your support as we work towards gathering **2,000 turkeys** this Thanksgiving to help families in need. Here are a few easy ways you can help:

- Shop Hy-Vee in Bloomington. You can shop as usual and purchase a turkey for \$20 right at checkout.
- Simply donate online at [hshministries.org/donate](http://hshministries.org/donate). In the campaign box, just designate your gift for Give Thanks.

Turkey donations will also be gladly accepted at Midwest Food Bank located at 2031 Warehouse Drive in Normal or at the Bread For Life Co-op located at 301 East Oakland Avenue in Bloomington. Thank you so much for helping us provide families with an opportunity to enjoy a wonderful meal this November.



## JOIN US FOR NIGHT IN A CAR 2024

Fall is here and we are so excited to once again promote our unique fundraising experience: Night In A Car! The NIAC 2024 event is being held Friday, February 2nd with in-person and online options to accommodate participants of all ages. Night In A Car is a homelessness simulation that creates awareness, compassion, help, and hope for the many people in our community experiencing the difficult realities of homelessness this winter. Whether you are an individual, a youth group, or a team of employees looking to make a difference in Bloomington/Normal, Night In A Car is a fantastic way to get involved. Your support will help us drive out homelessness. To learn more and sign up, please visit [nightinacar.org](http://nightinacar.org). Thanks for joining the ride!



Like us on Facebook  
Home Sweet Home Ministries

Like Us!





## FOR THE HOLIDAYS

*continued from page 1*

It created a truly inviting atmosphere, bringing volunteers and clients together to spread some holiday cheer. As parents excitedly browsed the displays, it was easy to see just how much they enjoyed picking out the best gifts for their children to enjoy.

"I love how sweet and helpful my kids are. I love the many ways they come together and help each other. I'm just super appreciative to have the opportunity to do this for my kids," shares Laura, who picked out gifts for her son and daughter.

"I'm so grateful to everyone who helped make this possible. I had so much fun picking out gifts for my girls," exclaims Penelope.

Home Sweet Home hopes to have more parents and agencies participate this year. If you are interested in getting involved or would like to provide gifts or even help decorate, please contact Steve at [stassio@hshministries.org](mailto:stassio@hshministries.org). Thank you for spreading joy this holiday season. God Bless!



# Current Needs

With your support, Home Sweet Home provides safety and comfort to families seeking a fresh start. We appreciate your help in collecting the following items:

- Instant Mashed Potatoes
- Canned Tuna
- Toilet Paper
- Paper Towels
- Full-sized Shampoo/Conditioner
- Body Wash

Donations can be dropped off at the Bread For Life Co-op at 301 East Oakland Avenue in Bloomington anytime Monday through Friday from 9 am to 4 pm. Be sure to check out [hshministries.org](http://hshministries.org) and click on the "Ways to Give" tab for updated urgent needs and links to our Amazon Wish list. Thank you so much for helping your neighbors in need. God Bless!

## Define Your Legacy

Home Sweet Home Ministries sincerely values your support. As good stewards, we would like to invite you to become a Legacy Partner to preserve the future of our ministry. As an HSHM Legacy Partner, you will help us support our shelter services and programming for years to come. To find more information to help guide your decision on the best way to leave your legacy, please visit our website at [hshministries.org](http://hshministries.org) and click on 'Planned Giving' under the 'Ways to Give' tab. You'll be able to access more details on HSHM's gift policy in addition to informational videos on topics including bequests, endowments, and trusts. If you would like more information, please contact HSHM's Director of Development, Leslie Bunge, at 309-319-2820 or [lbunge@hshministries.org](mailto:lbunge@hshministries.org).



## Employer Match Program

Looking for ways to make your impact go further? Many employers offer to match their employee donations. Be sure to check with your employer to see if your donation qualifies. This wonderful opportunity allows you to double your contribution to Home Sweet Home and make an even larger impact in our community. Kindly consider donating through your company's match program today.

As a friendly reminder, Home Sweet Home is happy to accept matches from State Farm. If you are a State Farm employee and currently have payroll deductions supporting HSHM, we encourage you to check and confirm your automatic payroll deductions. With recent updates, you may need to re-enroll. Thank you for being a neighbor we can count on to help provide safe shelter and delicious meals to those experiencing homelessness.