

OCTOBER 2019

A Clean Sweep

Growing up, Gwen always had a passion for cleaning. "When I was five years old, my grandmother would pull up a stool and I would help her wash the dishes every day. I loved it, plus I got to keep my nails clean."

If you've noticed a little extra sparkle to the shelter windows or extra shine on the floors, chances are Gwen had something to do with it. Thanks to generous people like you, Gwen has turned her love of cleaning into a new beginning for herself at age 62.

Back in April, Gwen found herself struggling to make ends meet after losing her job. Determined to be back on her own, she turned to Home Sweet Home for support. "Just because you're homeless, doesn't mean you can't be productive," shares Gwen.

Gwen worked with her case manager to secure a job through National Able, a program that helps seniors gain work experience. She can be found at Home Sweet Home with a broom in hand, doing it all with praise and smiles.

"No cleaning task is too tough for me," adds Gwen. "When I start something, I set my mind to it and I finish it. It will work my nerves until I get it right."

Over the next four months, Gwen swept her way to a brighter future. "Whatever they need me to do. I don't mind doing anything. As far as cleaning is concerned, washing dishes, doing laundry, cleaning the bathrooms. It's a job." She saved all her money and started looking for an apartment.

"I didn't give up. You know, nobody's perfect. It was a struggle, but it was something I wasn't going to give up on. And through the grace of God, I got my own place."

She remains full of life, hopes, and dreams. "I would love to go to college. I want to open my own rib shack. Nothing big. I've got my name for my building already: Gwen's Hallelujah Ribs. So Good They'll Make You Say Hallelujah!"



Gwen shares that on a wall in her home, she has framed some of her accomplishments to remind her of just how much she has overcome. She hopes to add a college diploma to that wall someday. And with a little extra elbow grease, God just might show her grace.

"God put this building here for a reason to help people like us in need. I am so grateful. I am so blessed. I love this place!"

MISSION STATEMENT

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



A Message from Mary Ann

*The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be
gracious to you;
the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and
give you peace.*

- Numbers 6:24-26

You are blessed to be a blessing. Here are just a few of the ways in which you are blessing others through your support of Home Sweet Home Ministries:

- James missed 3 days of work due to injuries from an accident, so he lost his job and was unable to pay his rent. You ensured that he had a safe place to live at Home Sweet Home until he could regain employment and find housing through our Rapid Rehousing program.
- Natalie struggles to pay for day care, rent, utilities, and repairs for her aging car. Your support of our Bread for Life Food Co-op makes it possible for Natalie to stretch her budget so that she and her three children can access healthy foods.
- Tyler had been turned down by so many employers that he doubted if he would ever be employed again. Your support of our case management services at Home Sweet Home made it possible for Tyler to obtain supportive employment through one of our partners, National Able, which enabled him to find housing.

Every day you bless the people who request help from Home Sweet Home. I pray that you will find the blessing above to be a source of comfort and strength.

Thank you for being a blessing.

Mary Ann Pullin

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Give Thanks

A traditional Thanksgiving meal includes a freshly roasted turkey, mashed potatoes and gravy, and green bean casserole. What if you weren't capable of providing such a meal to your family? Home Sweet Home Ministries and Midwest Food Bank are partnering once again this year to provide 2,500 Thanksgiving meal boxes to families in need. As the holiday season approaches, we ask for your help collecting turkeys.

"Our goal is to collect 2,500 turkeys in less than a month. We graciously ask the community to help show their support," says Home Sweet Home Ministries' Chief Operating Officer, Matt Burgess. "Your contributions will ensure families in need experience the comfort of a Thanksgiving meal."

Beginning in October, Bloomington-Normal groceries stores are helping with the cause. Hy-Vee will be selling the items needed for the boxes in individual or case quantities, in addition to \$15 turkey cards. Schnucks will be selling the \$15 turkey cards and \$10 prepackaged meal bags. Anyone from the community can visit these locations and donate a turkey or bag. Donations will also gladly be accepted at Midwest Food Bank located at 2301 Warehouse Drive in Normal or at Home Sweet Home Ministries located at 303 East Oakland Avenue in Bloomington.

Home Sweet Home Ministries is grateful for caring people like you to come together to ensure the success of this effort. Thank you for sharing your blessings this Thanksgiving!



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A Grateful Heart

"My name is Mindi. I am a 39 year old single mom to a 5 year old little girl. The circumstances that led me to Home Sweet Home were not unordinary, however, they were not typical either. I moved to Illinois from Idaho, pursuing a relationship. It was not an easy move by any means, to leave my family and friends behind. It was a huge leap of faith. The relationship I moved here for, obviously, did not work and because I did not know anyone I had no choice but to make some phone calls and figure out how to go about checking my daughter and myself into Home Sweet Home.

I had never stayed in a shelter before. Ironically, I had worked at one for 6 years and was a case manager for 2 years. To describe the range of emotions checking in and getting "settled" is rough. Humility, anger, and lost are just the beginning of those feelings. At one time, talking with my mom, I told her my emotions felt like one who is grieving and mourning death. The denial, the anger, the hurt. It was all overwhelming for quite some time.

I had a job the whole time I stayed here. Unfortunately, it was not always the same job because I had to find something suitable and that fit around my daughter's schedule. Either way, I continued to have a job. I finally got to a point where I had to humble myself and talk with my case manager about the Rapid Rehousing Program. Because of my background in working at a shelter, I knew resources were out there, I just had to ask. Asking for help is not my forte but I knew my daughter and I needed that little extra to get us back to where we wanted and needed to be.

Turns out I was a perfect fit for the program. It did not take long for the ball to get rolling and to get everything finalized. I was able to sign my lease and my daughter and I were able to move into our home.

I have nothing but gratitude for everyone that helped me along the way through my struggles. I went down a road I never thought I would see. With my perseverance and the help of HSHM, my daughter and I are back to where we needed to be. Home!"

Eternally grateful,
Mindi E.

NIGHT IN A CAR 2020

It's time to start revving up for Night In A Car 2020! Be sure to check out the improved website at www.nightinacar.org. You will discover more information about the next Night In A Car event and can easily sign up as an individual or team. Get inspired to join your community on **Friday, February 7th, 2020**.



For the event's fourth year, we're

adding

a new attraction: an escape room! All participants will have the opportunity to escape homelessness as they work their way through four seasons of obstacles. Don't miss this unique simulation as part of Night In A Car. Create a team today!



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HSHM Alumni Board

Over the years, Home Sweet Home has been blessed with leadership from members of the community who have served on our board of directors. A group of “board alumni” has recently been activated. If you are a former board member of Home Sweet Home Ministries, please contact Ashley Souk at asouk@hshministries.org or (309) 319-2839 to learn about how you can continue your involvement. Former board members are also invited to attend the next Board Alumni meeting on November 6 at 12:00 p.m. at the shelter located at 303 East Oakland Ave, in Bloomington. Please RSVP to Ashley Souk at asouk@hshministries.org or (309) 319-2839 by November 1, so that we can plan for lunch.

Women’s Auxiliary

The Women’s Auxiliary’s purpose is to support the work of Home Sweet Home Ministries through their prayers, time, talent, and monies, and to build awareness and support of HSHM within the community. Guests are welcome. Yearly dues are \$10.00. A lifetime membership is \$100.00.

Upcoming meetings:

- **November 11** – Members are invited to join in the Veteran’s Day observance at 11:00, followed by their meeting at 11:30 a.m. Residents of HSHM who are veterans will be invited to join Auxiliary members for lunch. The program speaker will be Chris Trimble, Director of Retail Operations, discussing the role of Retail Operations at HSHM. Location: Home Sweet Home Ministries, 303 E Oakland Avenue, Bloomington.
- **December 9, 11:30 a.m.** - Carol Griffith will be discussing Coincidences of Life. Location: Normal Township Hall, 304 E Mulberry Street, Normal.

Please check us out on Facebook at Home Sweet Home Ministries Auxiliary. Thank you.

Current Needs

With your support, Home Sweet Home provides families with access to food and other basic needs. Please consider hosting a drive during this season of giving. Help us collect the following items:

- Canned fruit
- Cereal
- Mashed potatoes
- Coffee
- Paper towels/napkins
- Baby wipes
- Newborn diapers
- Lotion-adults and babies
- Body wash-adults and babies
- Laundry detergent

Donations can be dropped off at the shelter at 303 East Oakland Avenue in Bloomington at any time. Thank you for helping others in need.

Surrounded In Prayer

As Home Sweet Home prepares for the holiday season, we graciously ask your help in praying for:

- our Veterans in search of new hope.
- community members hosting food drives and collecting turkeys to support Give Thanks.
- our food source providers, including local restaurants and grocery stores.
- individuals and families in need of safe shelter.
- volunteers, clients, and staff who devote their time in our shelter, Mission Mart, and warehouse.

Thank you for lifting our ministry up in prayer.