

JANUARY 2024



## A New Lease On Life

Having your own place to call home is everything. With Home Sweet Home's Rapid Rehousing program, we help people in need get into a home of their own as fast as possible. In response to the affordable housing crisis, our Director of Community Outreach, Steve Tassio, and Housing Navigator, Jacob Phillips, have started a new Master Leasing initiative to help provide access to housing for those who need it.

"We are excited to explore this new opportunity. Master Leasing offers us the ability to house clients who may not be able to get into an apartment due to barriers such as income, credit score, or no rental history," shares Steve.

Here's how it works: A landlord or property owner leases a unit to Home Sweet Home. As the listed tenant of that unit, HSHM can then sublease that unit to an individual or family within the Rapid Rehousing Program.

"This helps to eliminate barriers for participants to get into housing because the property owner entrusts Home Sweet Home with the qualifications of the applicants," adds Jacob. "It also gives us added flexibility to tailor the length of the lease to fit each

client's timeline, offering 3-, 6-, and 12-month leases."

Master Leasing also helps to decrease the number of evictions on people's records as staff can work directly with the participant to alleviate issues that arise while providing case management support.

"In a market where income, credit score, and background requirements are high, Master Leasing has been a bright spot," exclaims Jacob. HSHM signed our first Master Lease back in October. We have an individual in a 1-bedroom studio and a family of four in a 3-bedroom apartment that now have a place to call home.

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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

*"So if the old way, which has been replaced, was glorious, how much more glorious is the new, which remains forever! Since this new way gives us such confidence, we can be very bold."*

– 2 Corinthians 3:11–12

As Paul exhorted the early church to be bold in their faith in Christ, we find it increasingly necessary to be bold as we serve people at Home Sweet Home Ministries. As a ministry powered by the Holy Spirit, we are able to take steps into the unknown with a true sense of boldness.

Increasingly, we find it necessary to take these bold steps. The "tried & true" methods of helping our neighbors without addresses just aren't working anymore. That's why we've begun engaging in "Master Leasing" as part of our strategy. (See our featured story to learn more.) We're excited and optimistic about this new method of supporting people, and I hope you feel some of that excitement as well!

Trying new ways to help people experience restoration and hope is integral to our sense of organizational mission. We wouldn't be able to take these bold steps without your support through prayers, volunteering, and donations.

Thank you and may God bless you all for your faithful support of our ministry.

*Matt Burgess*

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# Holiday Blessings

Home Sweet Home would like to thank you for your support this past holiday season. Your donations, time, and prayers blessed several men, women, and children in our community. With the support of our partners at Midwest Food Bank, Thrivent Financial, and Hy-Vee, over 1,800 families received complete meal boxes and frozen turkeys through Give Thanks.

Additionally, volunteers graciously delivered 445 meals on Thanksgiving Day. Second Presbyterian Church creatively turned HSHM into a Christmas wonderland. Many other organizations and businesses also generously hosted food drives.

Because of you, many of our residents experienced the true joy of the holidays. With all our heart, we thank you. Home Sweet Home appreciates all you do to ensure the wellbeing of your fellow community members. We wish you and your families many blessings in 2024.



*Join Us!*

**Night In A Car, February 2**  
**Sign up or Donate Now: [nightinacar.org](https://nightinacar.org)**



Home Sweet Home Ministries' 8th annual Night In A Car is right around the corner on Friday, February 2. Participants are eagerly gathering up hats, gloves, and blankets to brave a cold night in their cars. While only lasting one night, Night In A Car provides a real glimpse into the realities of facing homelessness through Bloomington's harsh winters.

Participants can choose to drive-in to Trinity Lutheran Church in Bloomington or Zoom-in from the convenience of their own driveway. It's going to be another powerful night filled with fun games, client testimonies, and other educational activities.

This unique event is also something all ages can experience. It serves as a great educational opportunity to learn more about homelessness and the work HSHM does to help those in need. Home Sweet Home encourages you to join the ride. Together we can achieve our goal of raising \$175,000 to support those in need. Because of you, families experiencing homelessness can discover refuge and renewal at Home Sweet Home. It's such a blessing to have you as part of this caring community. We couldn't do it without you.

"This will be our 2nd year participating as a family, so we are doubling our goal! We participate because HSHM gives second chances, instills hope, teaches, and provides stability for our neighbors who are homeless right here in Central Illinois. Plus, it is one of the few opportunities we can engage our 7-year-old twin boys in community service. In 2023, they listened intently to the testimonials and through the guided activity, we talked about the privileges we have that others do not. We would be honored for you to support our NIAC team by donating!" -Amanda Ray, The Not-So-Sleeping Ray Car

There is still time to help! Please consider signing-up or donating today by visiting [nightinacar.org](https://nightinacar.org). If you have any questions, please reach out to our Night In A Car Coordinator, Leslie Bunge, at 309-319-2820 or [lbunge@hshministries.org](mailto:lbunge@hshministries.org). Thank You!

# REVVING UP FOR NIGHT IN A CAR



## Exploring Medical Respite

As HSHM continues to seek new approaches to better serve those in need, we are pleased to share some exciting news. Home Sweet Home has received a \$68,000 grant from the Illinois Public Health Institute as part of their Medical Respite Capacity Building Initiative. Medical Respite provides medical care, social services, and a safe place to recuperate for people experiencing homelessness after leaving the hospital. Over the next several months, HSHM staff will be developing a plan to help increase local capacity for Medical Respite in our community. We are blessed to explore this opportunity and look forward to closing the gap in transitional care for patients experiencing homelessness.

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Home Sweet Home Ministries

Like Us!



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"They are doing well and establishing goals to develop long-term stability. The property owners have been incredibly easy to work with and have made the process very fast to house our clients," says Jacob.

"We have been partnering with Home Sweet Home Ministries' Rapid Rehousing program with good success," share landlords Karen Schmidt and John Elterich. "It makes sense to us to continue and deepen this partnership through the Master Lease program. It allows [HSHM] to extend its supportive services to our tenants—a win-win partnership all around."

"I am blessed to provide foundations for people to build upon that will help them maintain housing for the long-term," says Jacob. "I look forward to continuing to help make a dent in the need for affordable housing in our community and provide stability for landlords that work with us."

Your prayers and donations make these new strategies possible. Please help us continue to shelter those in need. If you are interested in learning more about Master Leasing, please reach out to Jacob at [jphillips@hshministries.org](mailto:jphillips@hshministries.org). Thank you so much!



## Current Needs

Because of your compassion, Home Sweet Home can provide comfort to families seeking a fresh start. Please kindly consider collecting the following items for us:

- Bottled Water
- Paper Towels
- Toilet Paper
- Toothpaste
- Deodorant for Men and Women
- Body Wash for Men and Women
- New Bath Towels (Full-sized)

Donations can be dropped off at the Bread For Life Food Co-op at 301 E. Oakland Ave. in Bloomington. Be sure to check out [hshministries.org](http://hshministries.org) and click on the "Ways to Give" tab for our updated needs and Amazon Wish Lists. Thank you so much for providing hope to your neighbors in need.

## Ground Up Coffee

Home Sweet Home has brewed up a new way for you to sip and support us. We are pleased to partner with Zeta Coffee to bring you HSHM's own **Ground Up Coffee**. **Ground Up Coffee** is a whole bean, Columbian, medium-roast blend with a smooth taste. Our blend is available at Reckless Saint, Vera & Buck, and Bryan Miller Salon. Make sure to visit any of these retailers to purchase a bag and support Home Sweet Home. Proceeds from coffee sales will help us provide access to housing for those who need it. Thank you so much for helping us address the affordable housing crisis one cup at a time.



## Prayers Appreciated

As Home Sweet Home embraces the new year, we kindly ask your help in praying for:

- Individuals, families, businesses, and other organizations participating in Night In A Car.
- Individuals, families, and veterans searching for refuge and renewal.
- Volunteers and staff who devote their time to helping others.
- All those involved in supporting our Master Leasing program and Rapid Rehousing.
- All our staff developing a plan to bring Medical Respite to our community.

Thank you for lifting HSHM up in spirit.