

OCTOBER 2024

The Spirit of Thanksgiving

The comforting aromas of roasted turkey will soon fill the air at Home Sweet Home Ministries. Preparations are already under way to ensure a wonderful Thanksgiving meal for hundreds in our community. On average, HSHM prepares 100 meals to be served at the shelter in addition to delivering 500 meals to the elderly and shut in.

This season marks the first time our new kitchen staff has embarked on the task of feeding 600 individuals and families.

"I am most excited to see our community come together for the common good of all," shares Sha Estes, HSHM's Food Service Manager. "I have heard it's quite amazing and God is present."

Sha and her team have spent weeks planning every detail, ensuring that each bite is filled with the warmth and joy of the holiday. "My goal is to feed everyone that would like to have a Thanksgiving meal with no one left behind,"

adds Sha. "I am excited to serve up turkey, dressing, green bean casserole, mashed potatoes and gravy, cranberry sauce, and pumpkin pie."

To make all this happen, our dedicated kitchen staff will start cooking turkeys at the end of October. "We'll be preparing around 75 turkeys," says Sha. "We will cook approximately 8 per day."

As they spend hours in the kitchen, Sha knows that the gratitude and happiness they see makes every effort worthwhile. "Teamwork makes the dream work. As kitchen professionals, we all get extreme fulfillment from feeding hungry people. All the smiles and thanks from others really warms my heart. We all are honored and humbled to be part of such an amazing experience."

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

Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

– 1 Thessalonians 5:18

In anticipation of the 107th Thanksgiving at Home Sweet Home Ministries, we have already begun preparations to serve hundreds of our neighbors this November. It is a time of mutual gratitude, where we give thanks for the opportunity to serve, and our community members appreciate the warm meals and supportive services we provide.

At the heart of our mission is the commitment to build relationships. We believe that through the development of strong, compassionate relationships, we can help to nurture the individual spirit, promote self-sufficiency and create stronger, healthier communities. Through these connections, lives are restored, and hope is instilled.

We want to extend this vision to each of you – our friends, volunteers, and supporters. Whether you decide to donate, volunteer, or just read our stories and pray for our clients, your support is immensely appreciated. Together, we can make a lasting difference in our community, one act of kindness at a time.

May the upcoming Thanksgiving season bring you joy, peace, and gratitude. Together, we can instill hope, restore lives, and build a community rooted in the love and compassion of Jesus Christ.

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

Matt Burgess

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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. 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.



Like Us!

**Like us on Facebook
Home Sweet Home Ministries**



Street Outreach: Providing Connection and Service



At the beginning of June, Home Sweet Home Ministries started a Street Outreach program not only to continue the work of supporting our neighbors in the encampment next to the Junction, but also to go to various locations and encampments throughout Bloomington-Normal. Our goal is to alleviate the day-to-day struggles faced by the homeless population, providing a foundation upon which they can rebuild their lives.

“I work with people who are unhoused, who are sleeping on the streets, in tents, who don’t have a place they can call home. I work to get them hygiene supplies and basic survival items,” explains Lauren Wiggins, HSHM’s Street Outreach Specialist.

Beyond addressing physical needs, our Street Outreach ministry strives to build meaningful relationships with those we serve. We understand that homelessness is often accompanied by feelings of isolation and despair. By offering Christ’s love and compassionate support, we aim to restore a sense of hope. “We start off with the basics of building relationships, which is my favorite part. I just get to talk to everybody and learn their story,” adds Lauren.

“From those discussions, I’m able to pick out things they might want to work on. I don’t make anybody do anything they don’t want to do as far as goals. But if someone is wanting some dental care or medication or mental health services, I’m able to walk them through that process of connecting them with other agencies through a warm hand off.”

Home Sweet Home is grateful to be collaborating with eight entities including both Bloomington and Normal Police Departments, Eastview Church, and Chestnut Health Systems.

Our work with these partners help ensure a better continuity of care for our unsheltered neighbors. Through these connections, we help pave the way for healing and personal growth, fostering a community of support and resilience.

“There is this one woman that I have been working with from day one,” shares Lauren. “Over the past few months, I have seen her get into housing. She is looking so healthy and making doctor’s appointments. She is even attempting to reconnect with family.”

“It’s those success stories that you’ve just got to hang onto really tight,” exclaims Lauren. “We’re hoping to make more lasting changes.”

Home Sweet Home Ministries envisions a community where everyone has access to safe, stable, and affordable housing. Through our Street Outreach program, we are taking significant steps towards realizing this vision, offering hope and tangible support to those in need. Together, we can create a community where no one has to face homelessness alone.

Night In A Car, February 7th, 2025
Sign up now! www.nightinacar.org

Join Us!

The Spirit of Thanksgiving

continued from page 1

Each staff member is driven by a sense of purpose, knowing they are making a real difference. Through the hustle and bustle, it's clear to see that Thanksgiving is not only about the meal, but also about the simple, powerful act of giving. It is about coming together, sharing what you have, and making sure no one feels alone on this special day.

"I am so blessed to use my time and talents in this way," adds Sha. "It feels wonderful to provide nourishment and comfort to those we serve."

Every act of kindness can change a life. Help us spread companionship and cheer. Please kindly support our efforts to feed hundreds in need this November by donating at hshministries.org/donate.

May your Thanksgiving be as meaningful and abundant as the hope you have bestowed upon countless others. From all of us at Home Sweet Home, Happy Thanksgiving!



Night In A Car 2025: You're Invited!

Fall is here and we are so excited to once again promote our unique fundraising experience: Night In A Car! The NIAC 2025 event is being held Friday, February 7th with in-person and online options to accommodate participants of all ages. Night In A Car is a homelessness simulation that creates awareness, compassion, 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. Thanks for joining the ride!



Current Needs

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

- Individual bags of chips/salty snacks
- Ziploc snack size bags
- Instant Mashed Potatoes
- Cereal (hot & cold)
- Any canned food item
- Coffee
- Tea
- Flour/Sugar
- Cooking oil

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 and click on the "Ways to Give" tab for updated current needs and links to our Amazon Wish list. Thank you so much for helping your neighbors in need. God Bless!

Join Us In Prayer

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.
- our kitchen staff and volunteers preparing delicious meals for all to enjoy.
- the new connections and relationships created through Street Outreach.
- the community members and churches involved with Give Thanks distribution.
- 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.