



FRONT PORCH

NEWS | Fall 2023



**The People
Who Make
Bethany House Great**



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OUR MISSION

Bethany House Services empowers homeless and at-risk families with the solutions to achieve housing stability and long-term self-sufficiency.

OUR VISION

To live in a community where all families have a place to call home and no one spends a night without shelter.

CORE VALUES

Respect, Empowerment, Integrity, Excellence, Collaboration and Hospitality.

DEAR FRIENDS,



The people are always who have made Bethany House special.

Dedicated staff going above and beyond to care for families. **Generous volunteers** giving time, talent, and treasure to help the organization and clients. **Inspiring families** with hardworking parents and hilarious children.

In this newsletter, you'll meet a few of the people who have made Bethany House a fun and nurturing place for the past 40 years.

Just last month, Bethany House celebrated its 40th Anniversary with

a festive and successful fundraising event at The Spot on West Fifth. Over 275 people attended the celebration, including luminaries Sr. Dee Sizler (Bethany House cofounder), Susan Schiller (my immediate predecessor as CEO), and so many Board members and supporters.

Additionally, we bestowed four Beacon Awards on four longtime partners and supporters: **Mike Haverkamp** and **Good Shepherd Catholic Church**, **Project Connect**, **Charles H. Dater Foundation**, and **Gail Myers**. I am so grateful for the way each shines a light on family homelessness in our community.

Additionally, you'll read about back-to-school activities for the children of Bethany House, and you will meet volunteers making a difference in two unique areas: music and English as a Second Language (ESL).

Finally, we remember Bethany House's longest-tenured employee, **Gwendolyn Green**. Ms. Gwen sadly passed away on September 16th after more than 28 years of service, first as a case manager and most recently—for well over a decade—as the Shelter Director. Gwen's caring and generous nature knew no bounds.

As year-end approaches and we enter this season of gratitude, I want to thank you for also being one of the people who makes Bethany House special. Happy Holidays to you and yours!

Sincerely,

Peg Dierkers
Chief Executive Officer



Back to School in Style

Kids at Bethany House went back to school in style this fall thanks to a number of generous partners.

We started August with an appeal for K-12 school uniforms, and the response was tremendous. Not only did we receive numerous donations through our Amazon Wishlist, but also three local companies conducted uniform drives. A special thank you to eXP Realty, UMortgage, and Absolute Title for helping dress Bethany House students for the school year!

Additionally, kids going back to received fully stocked backpacks and were able to attend a huge

back-to-school celebration thanks to our friends at Innovative Opening Solutions (IOS). This is the third year that IOS has packed backpacks and school supplies for Bethany House, and this year they filled 144 backpacks to ensure that kids had all they needed to start the year off right.

Thanks to these generous supporters and others for helping children living at Bethany House start off the school year well!



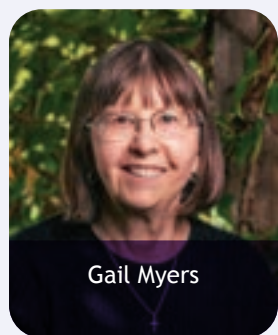


A Celebration to Remember



Four decades of compassion, countless lives touched. Bethany House's 40th Anniversary celebration on October 12 at The Spot on West Fifth was an unforgettable night of gratitude, honoring many people who have been pillars of support and helped uplift families in Greater Cincinnati.

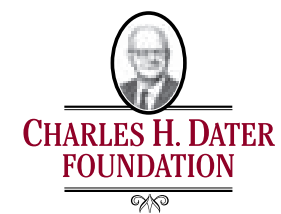
Bethany House gave out four Beacon Awards to the following honorees for "shining a light on families experiencing homelessness in our community":



Gail Myers



Mike Haverkamp and Good Shepherd Catholic Church



CHARLES H. DATER FOUNDATION



Project Connect
cincinnati public schools

The celebration also featured cocktails by Cincinnati's most famous self-taught bartender, Molly Wellmann; fabulous hors d'oeuvres from Magnificent Morsels, and music by DJ Pillo. When the 275+ guests weren't too busy eating or drinking, they were supporting Bethany House through the silent auction, raffles, fund appeal, or other fundraising activities.



And raise funds this event did! **The 40th Anniversary Celebration achieved an outstanding milestone by raising the most money any Bethany House event ever has: \$201,621** This success is a testament to our community's commitment to making a difference in the lives of Bethany House families.

Thank you to the Bethany House staff, volunteers, Board Members, committee members, sponsors, and supporters who made this event one to remember!

Natasha's Story

Perhaps the most inspiring part of Bethany House's 40th Anniversary Celebration was hearing the incredible story of Natasha, a courageous survivor who found refuge and support at Bethany House and has since transformed her life into something truly remarkable.

Natasha's journey at Bethany House started when she escaped an abusive relationship with her children's father. At Bethany House, she found safety, compassion, and the opportunity to start anew.

Natasha has always worked in the restaurant industry and had recently lost her job right before coming to Bethany House in 2020. She and her children stayed in a hotel during their time at Bethany House (as many families did during the pandemic), and luckily for Natasha, there was a kitchen area. She was able to perfect her cooking skills while in shelter, and this helped her to keep her mind at ease during a difficult time...as well as try out some new dishes!

She soon found a new job as a chef at Allyn's Café on Columbia Parkway. She still works there now three years later, bringing her new and unique flavors to the customers each week.

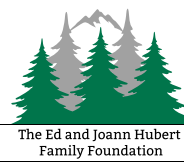
Natasha's journey reminds us of the importance of providing families with a safe space to heal and rediscover their passions. After 40 years, Bethany House remains committed to offering support, resources, and hope to individuals like Natasha who are seeking refuge and a fresh start.

Thank you to Natasha for sharing your remarkable journey with us at the 40th Anniversary Celebration!



A very special thank you to the evening's generous sponsors:

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Remembering Ms. Gwen

On September 16th, Bethany House lost its longest-tenured employee and one of the community’s most staunch advocates for families experiencing homelessness.

Gwendolyn Green, known affectionately by most as “Ms. Gwen,” started at Bethany House in 1995. She held a number of different case manager positions before being named the Shelter Director in 2010. Ms. Gwen continued in this role until her recent passing.

Ms. Gwen’s commitment to helping women and children was legendary. She was a teacher, listener, mentor, guide, and confidant for so many staff and clients. For her service and dedication, she was honored with the Greater Cincinnati Homeless Coalition’s “Julie Martin Award” and Church Women United’s “Vibrant Woman Award,” among others.

Thinking about the great joy she felt about her work at Bethany House, Gwen reflected just a few months ago, “It’s just the best when families get housing and move out, then come back to tell you how they’re doing. We have a lot of women who come back years later to see us and show us how much their kids have grown.”

Our community is a stronger place thanks to Ms. Gwen’s compassion and dedication. Rest in peace and power, Ms. Gwen.



Volunteer News



Music with Timmy

Timmy is a talented student from Seven Hills School who has been performing music on a weekly basis at Bethany House for nearly two months. The families, especially the children, adore him!

Timmy sings and play the guitar and can be found serenading families in our dining room during meals or performing with children during Kidz Zone. No matter where he is, he helps create a relaxing, calming, and fun atmosphere for families living in shelter.

He loves sharing his musical gifts with others, but what truly motivates Timmy is making people happy. Bethany House is so fortunate to have him as a part of the volunteer program. Thank you, Timmy!



New ESL Volunteer-Led Program

Bethany House embraces different cultures, celebrates diversity, and understands inclusion. It is essential that when a family walks through the doors, regardless of race, ethnicity, country of origin, or any other characteristic, they feel respected, loved, and cared for.

This includes having services available in your native language. Having people who can communicate with families in their first language—especially during times of crisis—is one way Bethany House can deepen its commitment to trauma-informed care. Though Bethany House uses the Language Line for non-English speakers, a noticeable uptick in Spanish-speaking families has spurred on a new development.

In October, Bethany House began hosting “Learn How to Speak Conversational Spanish” classes to all staff. Elizabeth Salinas Newby, a retired social worker and native of Mexico will be teaching the classes. She speaks Spanish fluently and certainly understands the culture and needs of the families that Bethany House serves. We are so excited about this new collaboration!



Photo credit: News Journal, www.wnewsj.com/2021/09/08/quaker-lecture-series-to-feature-my-restless-spiritual-journey/

“Bethany House is an organization that really cares about serving their families, and I am excited to be a part of their mission.”

- Elizabeth Salinas Newby, Bethany House volunteer



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ADOPT a FAMILY *For Christmas*



The holidays are quickly approaching! This holiday season, you have the incredible opportunity to bring joy to families at Bethany House. Your support can help every family fulfill their holiday wishes.



To join us in this heartwarming effort, you can sign up by scanning the QR code or by visiting our website at: www.bethanyhouseservices.org/adopt-a-family/



For additional details on how to participate in Adopt-a-Family and other holiday initiatives, please contact Morgan Griffey at mgriffey@bhsinc.org or 513-824-8044.

We extend our warmest wishes for a joyful holiday season filled with the comforts of home to you and your loved ones.