

Happenings

YOU helped put a key in Carol's hand and a smile on HER face

Carol was an ambitious, upwardly-mobile professional. During 22 years with the same company, she managed and mentored others for promotion—until she injured her back, an event that altered her life. For two years, she survived on worker's compensation, then unemployment benefits. When those ran out, Carol was both unemployed and homeless, living at Missionaries of Charity in Gary. That's where she began to use her life story as a teaching tool for shelter staff and clients.

"I talked to those who ran the shelter about how they talk to clients," Carol explained. "I wanted to help them see how ways of speaking can be hurtful to people."

She also realized how many of the women living at the shelter were talented and just needed a second chance. "I'm an accountant, and another woman was a trained social worker, and all of us were just trying to reclaim our lives in a situation where options were very limited," Carol said.

While participating in STH's day center programs, she found broader options. Her case manager helped her file for disability and found an apartment for her in a Gary housing complex, with funding that paid rent for one year. This enabled Carol to set new goals. "I'm getting healthy, and I plan



to start my own business as a tax preparer and, eventually, own my own home!" she shared.

In 2021, STH staff helped move 37 individuals like Carol into stable housing. It's not always easy, but thanks to **YOU**, more STH clients are opening doors to a better future. **YOU** supported our transportation, supervised child enrichment, job and career training, and other programs so women and families can rebuild their lives. **YOU** let them know that others care, that they have partners encouraging them along the way. And, **YOU** give us a reason to say, **"Let's find some keys!"**





THANK YOU for making our 2022 Walk for STH a vibrant event!

Our dedicated and generous walkers, teams and sponsors helped raise more than \$106,000 for our 23rd annual Walk for STH on June 11th! That means we can serve more women and families with educational and support services, food and basic necessities, and ensure that fewer go without safe, stable housing.

**World Homeless Day is
Monday October 10th**

Founded in 2010, World Homeless Day is observed on every continent except Antarctica to draw attention to those experiencing homelessness and encourage communities to respond. This year, STH is also marking October 10th. Plans are still being developed, so stay tuned for more information. In the meantime, here is a snapshot of homelessness in the United States, according to the 2021 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress:

- **More than 326,000 Americans experienced sheltered homelessness on any given night.**
- **The typical person experiencing sheltered homelessness was older than 25, male, and White or of non-Hispanic, non-Latino ethnicity.**
- **Eight percent of adults experiencing sheltered homelessness were veterans.**

- **About 41,000 family households were experiencing homelessness in 2021. Nine percent of available beds for families were “voucher” beds, or those in motel and hotel rooms.**
- **There were an estimated 1,285 families in Indiana experiencing homelessness.**

“Let ... individuals make the most of what God has given them, have their neighbors do the same, and them do all they can to serve each other... It is a good thing to be dependent on each other for something, it makes us civil and peaceable.”

~ Sojourner Truth

We’re grateful for all the ways you have helped us do all we can over the years to serve our neighbors who are experiencing homelessness.





WHAT HAPPENED WHEN MY 'MOM' COULDN'T GET US HELP

My mom and dad got divorced. Now, mom goes to work to support me, my 12-year-old sister and 17-year-old brother. But she doesn't earn enough money to make the payments on our house. We get something called TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) and food stamps, but dad took the car, so we need to get bus passes to go anywhere, even to school. Mom can't afford to buy many of those, and she has lots of places to go—the bank, legal aid, the grocery store. So sometimes we don't go to school. And when the lines are too long at legal aid or the social worker's, mom needs to get another bus pass to go back. If she doesn't have enough money, she can't get us help.

In the above situation, I was "Oscar Olson," a nine-year-old child whose family was plunged into poverty when his parents divorced. I was role playing, like most of the attendees of a Community Action Poverty Simulation (CAPS) co-hosted by Sojourner Truth House and Northwest Indiana Community Action. Held in April at Goodwill Industries' Excel Center on Ridge Road in Gary, employees of both organizations played professional roles during the event (banker, attorney, grocery clerk, day care worker, police officer, etc.). Each of the 30 or so participants—like me—were assigned to a family, and each family had a packet with descriptions of family members, their economic situation, and other information to set up their simulations.

In one quick hour, divided into 15-minute periods that represented one week, each family had to visit the welfare office to get TANF checks, go to the bank to get checks cashed, visit the mortgage/landlord to

make a payment, pay utilities, do grocery shopping, see how far they could make their money stretch ... and solve any of the random problems that cropped up. At one point, under threat of foreclosure, my mom, "Opal Olson," tried to get help from the legal aid office, but found it was closed in the middle of the day. She attempted to pay our utility bill, but workers in the office were too busy to help and told her to come back. Two days later, when she could afford another bus pass, the utility office told her that her account had been turned over to collections. She came home and found that a window was broken, and then a shady money lender showed up at our door and waved a gun at us. And that was only during the first two weeks of the month.

After the simulation ended, participants joined together to reflect on their experiences. Anxious, overwhelmed, and frustrated were words heard numerous times to express how "family" members felt.

"We need to remember that people are not their situations—we need to help them move on from their situations," shared one person who played a professional role. "We don't have to talk down to people, we can be kind and still follow rules."

According to the CAPS website, the program "bridges the gap from misconception to understanding." More information about this interactive immersion experience can be found at www.povertysimulation.net.

Come Celebrate 25 Years!



Please join us! For more information,
go to sojournertruthhouse.org/anniversary

One key. One smile.

STH 25th Anniversary Celebration Luncheon

Sunday, September 18th
11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Avalon Manor on U.S. 30 in Merrillville.

Individual tickets are \$75, or \$500 for a table of eight

Thank You to Our Foundation Partners

We're grateful for the support provided
so far in 2022 through the following grants:

- Helen Brach Foundation,
Client Celebrations
- United Way of Northwest Indiana,
Emergency Food & Shelter Program
- AARP Indiana,
Food Pantry Program
- The Starbucks Foundation
Neighborhood Grant
- Geminus Community Partners,
Moms as Teachers Program



Did you know ...

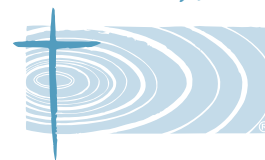
Since 1997 STH has:

- Provided food to more than 198,000 individuals
- Helped more than 490 clients obtain housing
- Served more than 965 shelter clients, (includes women and children)



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Sojourner Truth House is a ministry of
the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ.