

HAPPENINGS



Sojourner Strong:
Building a Community
of Change



Unlock hope: taking steps to end homelessness & hunger.



From Strong to Sojourner Strong

Amanda is a survivor. She successfully overcame domestic violence and substance abuse and was filled with a compassionate vision to serve those struggling with similar situations. But that vision was sidelined by a series of unfortunate events—and the loss of her home. For a while, Amanda relied on the kind acts of others for shelter, but even that didn't last.

One evening, while sleeping on a city bus, someone referred her to Lydia House, a local Gary shelter that serves single women experiencing homelessness. Lydia House sends clients to Sojourner Truth House for vital support services. Amanda diligently participated in STH classes that enabled her to refocus and find stability. Within a few months, Amanda had a job and her own apartment.

"I've been able to maintain my employment, and purchase a car," Amanda shares with enthusiasm. "Now, my goal is to be of service to women in need. I know the harsh realities they face, and I want to provide them with a haven like I found."

Amanda continues to receive support services as a Transitional Outreach Program Participant at STH. This program provides essential services like case management, personal development classes, and career training, all designed to empower women like Amanda to reach their full potential.

Amanda's story is a testament to the life-changing impact of STH. With your support, more women find the path from shelters to self-sufficiency, turning their dreams into reality every day.

Thanks to you, Amanda is working toward her goal of helping others.



Sojourner Truth's Remarkable Steps

According to an article in the April 2021 issue of The Smithsonian titled "The Remarkable Untold Story of Sojourner Truth," she often performed the song "I Am Pleading for My People," singing what are believed to be her original lyrics set to the tune of Auld Lang Syne: "I'm pleading for my people/A poor, downtrodden race/Who dwell in freedom's boasted land/With no abiding place."

With no abiding place – the same can be said for our clients. As they sojourn through homelessness, joblessness, hunger, and poverty, thank YOU for ensuring they receive services that help them take remarkable steps to exit homelessness.



Community Ambassadors Make a Sojourner Difference

Imagine a community where no one has to worry about their next meal and everyone has a safe place to call their own. That's the vision that drives the Community Ambassadors for STH, our dedicated auxiliary group making a real difference in our community. Ambassadors give their time and talents to help women, children, and others in Northwest Indiana who are experiencing homelessness or struggling to make ends meet. The group of volunteers focuses on advocacy, awareness, fundraising, and volunteering.

Take Sharon Kenning, a longtime volunteer and Community Ambassador extraordinaire. Recognizing the urgent need in our pantry, Sharon spearheaded the "5 Loaves 2 Fishes" initiative, a county-wide food drive that has stocked the STH pantry with countless pounds of essential food and personal items.

Her dedication doesn't stop there. Recently, Sharon connected with Sammy Eaton of the Gary Post Office, turning Sojourner Truth House into a beneficiary of the National Association of Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive. Thanks to their combined efforts, a staggering 4,025 pounds of food – enough for 3,354 meals!* – filled the pantry shelves, a testament to the power of community action.

Thank you, Sharon, and all who donated to or helped with this year's Stamp Out Hunger campaign!

Visit sojournertruthhouse.org/ambassadors or call 219-885-2282 to learn more and join this incredible group of volunteers. Together, let's rewrite the narrative for those experiencing hunger and homelessness in our community.

**In 2023, STH's food pantry distributed 247,430 pounds of food, the equivalent of 206,192 meals, based on USDA guidelines that say one meal is equal to 1.2 pounds of food and grocery products.*



The Heart Behind the Gift



Lisa Kerman is a doer. When she found out that her church, Suncrest Christian Church, has a volunteer worship team that serves each month at Sojourner Truth House, she immediately got involved.

"We do anything STH may need extra hands with—food pantry organizing, setting up for holiday events, gardening, just whatever their need is, we show up to assist," Lisa explains. "I am blown away by the depth of what STH provides not just for the community but for the future of the women and children who need it most. This is such an incredible community of HUGE HEARTS! Every single person that I've met through STH has impressed me with their level of compassion, and caring about doing the right thing for all who may need assistance and just being kind along the way."

While she loves giving her time, Lisa chose to do more. She became a monthly giver through STH's Saint Katharina's Calendar Club. "As a member of Suncrest, we believe in 'next steps' on our own individual journeys in our faith," she says. "THIS was part of my NEXT STEP. Volunteering at STH was no longer just enough for me—I wanted to expand on what I could give, and it hopefully won't just stop there!"

Thank you, Lisa! You can be part of this community of HUGE HEARTS, too—be a monthly giver like Lisa. Visit sojournertruthhouse.org/monthly-giving or scan the QR code.

Scan here!



Thank **YOU** for making our 25th Anniversary Walk for STH a Success!

The weather was great, the carnival colors were bright, and the walkers' smiles were endless at the 25th annual Walk for STH on June 8th. Hundreds of walkers on more than a dozen teams participated in the fundraiser, including Gary Mayor Eddie Melton's "Greater Gary" team. As of July 9th, a total of **\$111,278** was raised to help more of our neighbors in need.

THANK YOU to our sponsors, vendors, team captains, and walkers! We hope to see you again next year for the 2025 Walk for STH on June 14th!



Our Funding Partners

The following grants were gratefully received from generous funders during the first half of 2024:

- Helen V. Brach Foundation
- AARP Indiana
- United Way NWI/Emergency Food and Shelter Program
- Geminus Community Partners
- Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority NAP Tax Credit Program



410 W. 13th Avenue
Gary, IN 46407

www.sojournertruthhouse.org | (219) 885-2282



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