



Progress in the "Pause"

The past month since our “pause” in services began on May 13 has been filled with planning and preparations aimed at one goal: to come back stronger than ever!

At our first staff meeting the following Monday morning, we created a project list of “must haves before re-opening.” Specific tasks were assigned to various staff and board members in nearly 20 different areas: developing and making plans to implement new policies and procedures; assessment of staffing needs and hiring strategies; needed transformations of our facilities and grounds; enhancements in security; and much more!

Then the real work began! Connecting with and visiting other shelter operations in our region. Meetings with contractors, consultants, and vendors. More strategy sessions. Job fairs and open interviews. A flurry of emails, Facebook messages, and phone calls that resulted in the

generous donation of 20 bunk beds for our men’s shelter!

There’s still work to do, but as Rob relates at the end of this newsletter, it is essential to use this time to “get things right.” Through this time, we have been blessed by the help and encouragement we’ve received from community partners and faithful supporters like you. We will be back better and stronger. Thank you for having faith in us!

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Ministry Focus: Transitional Housing

When C-U at Home began in 2012, our efforts originally focused on street outreach and transitional housing. The **Phoenix Center** came along in 2014, a **men's shelter** followed when we occupied our building here at the corner of Washington and Market in 2018, and **Austin's Place women's shelter** joined us the following year.

During this period of reduced services at the shelters and Phoenix Center, we continue to provide **transitional housing** for individuals coming out of substance abuse recovery programs, incarceration, or off the streets. We operate a four-bed Men's Recovery House, two-bed Women's House, a small Family House, and a three-bed "Step-Above" residence for those who are ready to take the next step toward a productive life on their own.

Prospective participants are surveyed and assessed for compatibility by our **Housing and Outreach Team** (**Steven Harper**, Coordinator;



Women's Transitional House

John Parks, Associate). Residents stay for 6-12 months and are provided with weekly case management and a spiritual adviser. Through ongoing support, encouragement, and mentoring, residents learn to become more independent, self-sufficient, and hopeful about their futures.



"Alchemy House" (l-r) Steven, John, and Electrum Group's Weiss Lancaster

During the past couple of years, more than 20 people have participated in our transitional housing program. Three current residents have full-time jobs and are on their way to independence. Surveys are underway to place new residents in our women's house and new men's residence, a partnership with the **Electrum Group** called **"Alchemy House."**

If you have an interest in helping people help themselves, we are always in need of volunteers to help as case managers and spiritual advisors. To find out more about how you can help, contact our **Housing and Outreach Team** at steven@cuathome.us or john@cuathome.us.





The two staff members featured in this month's spotlight have one thing in common: they both are life-long residents of Champaign County!

Susan McKee (right), originally from Allerton, has lived near Homer for 18 years. She holds an Associate's Degree from Parkland College and worked as an administrative assistant at Human Kinetics before her children came along.

"I was a stay-at-home mom for the last 20 years before starting here in 2019," she notes. "I was volunteer mom extraordinaire: girl scout leader, PTC president, booster club president, post prom coordinator. You know, ALL the stuff no one else wants to do!"

Susan is our Administrative Assistant, taking care of a lot of the day-to-day details that keep us on track. She loves her work here and finds it especially rewarding when our friends find work in the job program or find better lives through getting housed. She helps celebrate the latter by putting together "blessing baskets" filled with all the little things it takes to get started in your own place, such as cleaning supplies, towels, etc.



"I also love being a part of One Winter Night and seeing the community come together to help us reach our goal," she says. "I just love our whole C-U at Home family!"

Susan has been married to husband Jim for 26 years. They have two adult children: Macey, who is an elementary teacher; and Logan, who is in the Army National Guard and attends the University of Illinois. In her free time, she enjoys hanging out with Jim and their dog, Ozzie, and she always loves when the whole family can still spend time together!

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where they need to go, and he is part of the team that evaluates applicants for transitional housing and monitors their progress.

“It is especially challenging working with people who are struggling with substance abuse, mental health issues,” he says. “Determining how best to assist and empower them toward success is always the goal. But in the end it’s up to them.”

John and his wife, Donna, have been married 25 years. They have a daughter (Courtney) and two grandsons (Carter and Everson, ages 11 and 2). John enjoys camping, fishing, bicycling, and hiking.

“About anything that gets me outdoors,” he says, “Especially when it's something our family can do together.”

John Parks (above), our Housing and Outreach Associate, is a life-long resident of Urbana. He began working with us in July of 2020 after retiring from 30 years with Facilities and Services at UIUC.

“I earned a BA from Eastern Illinois University during my last three years at the U of I,” John relates. “I graduated and retired the same year! I came here because I wanted to embark on a second career where I could serve God and others.”

John, more than most of us, experiences first-hand the progress made by our friends who struggle with housing, recovery, and treatment .

“Seeing someone leave our transitional housing program successfully, even when it's just a step in the right direction, it's encouraging to be a small part of that,” he says. “A difficult, stressful day can still be a win when we achieve even a small victory for one of our friends.”

John is one of our “first responders” when someone calls our emergency outreach hotline. He also helps friends with transportation needs to get



Over 400 calls were made to our Outreach Hotline 217-888-0329 from March thru May by people seeking help with shelter, housing, or transportation



Nearly 500 calls were made to our Phoenix Center from March thru May by people seeking help or other information



We've spent the last few weeks developing connections with other shelters in East-Central Illinois and beyond, including a network of shelters throughout the Chicago suburbs and also in LaSalle-Peru and Ottawa. Although separate operations, they all identify themselves with an interesting acronym: **PADS**.

PADS stands for **Public Action to Deliver Shelter**, but some locations have an adapted version: **Providing Advocacy, Dignity, and Shelter**. The PADS concept originated in 1992 when Tri-Village PADS was founded in response to the growing problem of homelessness in Oak Park, River Forest, and Forest Park. Rotating through seven churches, a staff of community volunteers worked together to provide for a meal and a night's shelter for homeless people.

Doug Kenshol, Executive Director of South Suburban PADS, graciously invited us to participate in a monthly online "Northern Illinois Shelter Peers" meeting he leads. It was a great learning experience, and a partnership we are looking forward to continuing!

Doug shared some "key characteristics of SSPADS' programs": interfaith partnerships, hospitality, compassion, service, and dignity. SSPAD's website

lists three "core values" that lie at the heart of their mission: empowerment, compassion, and respect.

It was interesting to learn that this "Shelter Peers" group had already been discussing expanding the networking group beyond Chicagoland, perhaps even statewide. Our reaching out was seen as an important first step in that direction.

It has been a great blessing during this time of transformation for our own ministry to find other like-minded partners to connect with and to learn that many of our challenges were things they had all faced (and often still do!). Establishing and maintaining relationships like these are another exciting step in our quest to "be back stronger!"



Business Partnership

Maggie McGuire and the staff at **Stocks Office Furniture** have been a blessing for many years! They have been a **One Winter Night** Business Sponsor since 2017. They've helped us with great deals on office furniture needs, and most recently, with design ideas and furniture for our renovated Phoenix/Men's Shelter space. **Stocks**: "We're known by the companies we keep!"



South Suburban PADS
Public Action to Deliver Shelter

A Word from Rob

Hello friend!

Someone much wiser than me once said, "The comeback is always stronger than the setback." Like so many ministries, businesses, and organizations across the county, we have recently experienced a "setback" in the form of severe staffing shortages, especially in our overnight shelter. Lack of applicants and staff led us to make the most difficult decision we've had to make in recent memory: to reduce services and capacity until we have the staff needed to operate effectively and safely.

As the pandemic escalated last spring, we kept our shelters open when our friends were at their most vulnerable. Last month, as we made this difficult decision to reduce services for the short term, community organizations and businesses stepped in to fill gaps just as they did last year. We are blessed to be part of an AMAZING community where people have HUGE hearts and a fervent PASSION to serve!

We had originally hoped to return to full operation on June 14th. While we are making progress, several key positions remain to be filled. This will require a bit more time of limited services, but we are determined to make adequate staffing our highest priority.

Our current circumstances may seem like a "setback," but I am confident our "comeback" will be stronger, providing our friends on the street far more than before! We've seen areas where we can do better, and we WILL be better. Our friends need it, our community needs it, and we are up to the task!

**In His Service,
Rob Dalhaus III, Executive Director**



Introducing our 200th Hope Giver!

On June 1, **Kristen Dille** of Kristen Dille Homes became our **200th Hope Giver**, bringing us **one-third of the way to our goal of 600!**

From the outset of starting her own real estate business last year, Kristen was inspired by a mentoring friend's advice: "We as Christians always want to be generous people." Those words came to mind when she heard our managing director speak at her church and explain how our work was impacting the community.

"As I began walking in and out of many different houses, my mind kept going back to your organization and my heart broke for those 'friends without an address'," she recalls. "I decided to set a personal goal for my small business and that giving back in this very small way would be the start. C-U at home not only impacts and touches the lives of those I'm working with but, more importantly, those I'm not."

Thank you so much, Kristen, for your generosity and encouragement! We are blessed to have you as our **200th Hope Giver!**

Learn more about becoming a **Hope Giver** at our website, www.cuathome.us. Scroll down to "Join the Hope Givers Team Today!" and if you feel inspired, simply click on the **red donate button!**