



GOD'S SHELTER OF LOVE

FEBRUARY 2016

SERVING DECATUR SINCE 1991



Thank You for your kindness...  
*and for your loving support*

**M**y name is Valerie. I was an army baby born in Germany, and I grew up in Detroit as an only child. Originally I planned a career in the medical field, but when I found myself twice divorced and raising three daughters as a single mom, I went for the high wages at Ford Motor Company—and ended up working there for 21 years. Just like my mom and dad did for me, I provided everything my daughters needed or wanted. So you know, I should not ever have been homeless.

**The word “homeless” wasn’t even in my vocabulary.**

At one point I got sick and had to quit my high-paying job. After finding out I had bipolar depression and getting the right medicine, I got my job at Ford back; however, I lost my nice home to foreclosure. Still, I was able to continue to raise my girls in relative luxury in an apartment.

My third husband was controlling and belittling. My marriage was so miserable, it drove me to drink and eventually to separate from him and move in with my mother, who had moved to Texas. (This was after my father had died and my daughters were grown.) I got a job as a high-low fork lift driver, but living with my mom didn’t work out; after nine months, I moved to Florida for a couple months and then returned to Michigan. The stress of a third divorce, unemployment, and moving from place to place caused a complete mental and physical break-down. Actually, things started getting crazy when my father died in 2009. None of this would have happened if he were still living—he was my best friend and taught me not to ever let anyone take away my dignity.

Next, my brother, whom I had only met three or four times, offered me a place to stay in Decatur, Illinois. He was a single career man and a lay minister. A member of his church helped me get a job in housekeeping at Decatur Memorial Hospital, but I felt totally alone in Decatur. I had lost everything and was living with a virtual stranger who had strict rules. Feeling completely overwhelmed, I broke down at work. I had been drinking and without medication for a long time. I went straight from DMH to the detox program at Heritage Behavioral Center. Getting back on my bipolar medication and going to classes on dual addiction were helpful. After the detox program, I went to God’s Shelter of Love.

I was nervous about coming to a homeless shelter, but it was very different from what I imagined. God’s Shelter is just like a home. I especially appreciate the opportunity to go back to school, rather than looking for a job I don’t really want. Ed told me, “School is your main priority.” In December 2015, I was able to earn three certificates: Introduction to Health, CPR, and PCA (Personal Care Assistant). Now I’m taking an 8-week program to obtain the CNA designation. Then I’ll work as a CNA while pursuing an LPN degree and, eventually, an RN. If it weren’t for the help and support of the staff at Gods Shelter of Love, I couldn’t have done it.

**God has been with me through all of this. He has something else planned for me.**

The most important things are to never lose your dignity or your belief in God.

**Many thanks to our partner churches for your prayers and generosity in 2015!**

**Decatur Churches**

Antioch Christian Church  
 Bethlehem Presbyterian Church  
 Boiling Springs Church of God  
 Central United Methodist Church  
 First Baptist Church  
 First Christian Church  
 First Congregational United Church of Christ  
 First Presbyterian Church  
 First United Methodist Church  
 Heartland Community Church  
 Lampstand Presbyterian Church  
 Life Foursquare Gospel Church  
 Mound Chapel Church of God  
 Mound Road Christian Church  
 New Beginnings Church of God  
 Our Lady of Lourdes Parish  
 Saints James and Patrick Parish  
 South Shores Christian Church  
 Tabernacle Baptist Church

**Central Illinois Churches**

Assumption Christian Church  
 Bethel United Methodist Church, Blue Mound  
 Cowden Christian Church  
 Elwin United Methodist Church  
 First Baptist Church, Mt. Zion  
 First Christian Church, Clinton  
 First Christian Church, Moweaqua  
 First Church of God, St. Elmo  
 First United Methodist Church, Moweaqua  
 Forsyth United Methodist Church  
 Hammond United Methodist Church  
 Heyworth Christian Church  
 Mt. Zion Christian Church  
 Mt. Zion Presbyterian Church  
 Texas Christian Church, Clinton

**2015 WSOY Community Food Drive**

Special thanks to Neuhoff Media for sponsoring the 2015 WSOY Community Food Drive that benefited many great charities throughout Decatur including God's Shelter of Love. The food drive set a new record of 1,271,080 pounds/dollars, up from the 1,040,000 collected in 2014, an amount that was equally astounding one year ago. What a generous community!



**Is Your Name Written Down?**

Is your name written down in the Heaven up above

It will only be there if you accept God's great gift of love

His love is the wonderful plan of salvation that he gave

When his only son went to the cross for you and me to save

He sent his only son named Jesus to be our Lord and Savior

Jesus came to earth to save us, but with the world he found no favor

They nailed him to a cross for our crimes and him we did eschew

He said "Father forgive them for they know not what they do"

Jesus came into the world to save sinners and not to condemn

He said "Your sins are paid for. I am the great I Am."

He went willingly to the cross to save us from our sin

If you trust him with your heart someday to Heaven you'll enter in.

**Special Thanks**

Fred Devera, Diane Guinn, and Jim Cobb for leading weekly Bible studies at the shelter throughout the year. Because of them, we are able to offer residents Bible study three times a week!

**Memorial Gifts**

From Gloria Redden given in loving memory of my parents Roscoe and Adele Cook.

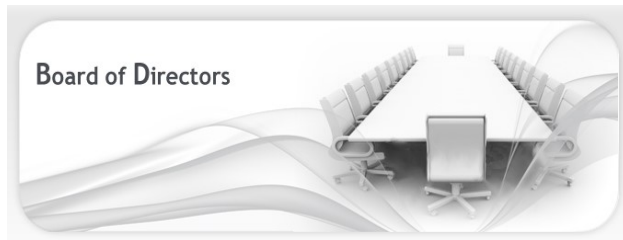
**Needs list**

**Shelter:** toilet paper, prepaid gas cards, bus tokens, zip-lock bags (quart and gallon size), dish soap, dishwasher and laundry detergent, liquid hand soap, cake/cookie icing.

**Blessingdales:** Volunteers, Windex, paper towels, toilet paper, manilla folders, grocery & shopping bags, string tags, sharpie markers, tall kitchen garbage bags.

**Blessingdales shopping and donation drop-off hours: Monday - Saturday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.**

**Empty ink-jet cartridges?** We will recycle them for you! Please drop them off at the Shelter or Blessingdales. *We are no longer accepting copier toner cartridges.*



Ed Bacon, Director  
 Harold Batthauer, Board President  
 Ty Batthauer, Decatur, IL  
 Greg Taylor, Clinton, IL  
 Michael Mallick, Lincoln, IL  
 Larry Hughes, Decatur  
 Mike Reynolds, Decatur

**Please let us know if you would like to partner with us or are in need of prayer.**

I would like to receive the Heartbeat by mail \_\_\_\_\_.

I want to give monthly to God's Shelter of Love in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ / month.

I am giving a one-time donation to God's Shelter of Love. \_\_\_\_\_

I will pray regularly for God's Shelter of Love \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Please pray for... \_\_\_\_\_

Have you prayerfully considered including God's Shelter of Love in your will?



Take a close look at this amazing group of people! On Tuesday, December 1st, "Giving Tuesday," we came together at First United Methodist Church in Decatur to try to raise a few more dollars for our missions. The residents of Macon County are so blessed to have these agencies at work for them. Represented are: Baby Talk, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Boys Scouts of America, CASA, Catholic Charities, Central IL Christians in Mission, Dove, God's Shelter of Love, Good Samaritan Inn, Homeward Bound, MAX, Northeast Community Fund, Oasis Day Center, Prairie Flower Montessori and the Salvation Army.

GOD'S SHELTER OF LOVE  
929 NORTH UNION STREET  
DECATUR, ILLINOIS 62522  
(217) 422-2790/2791

NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION  
US POSTAGE PAID  
PERMIT #252  
DECATUR, ILLINOIS

\*RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Congratulations to the first graduates of the Retail Training Institute at Blessingdales! In addition to eight weeks of on-the-job training at Blessingdales, these students logged 32 classroom hours learning resume writing, interviewing techniques, and many other valuable employment skills. We're very proud of these students and are looking forward to the upcoming Spring session beginning March 7th.

Visit us online @ [Godsshelteroflove.org](http://Godsshelteroflove.org) & [Blessingdalesthiftshop.com](http://Blessingdalesthiftshop.com)

