



GOD'S SHELTER OF LOVE

DECEMBER 2017

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Amber and family - Home for the Holidays

It's a story you're seeing more and more in the news: the opioid epidemic in the United States. Like so many others, I got hooked on prescription pain pills due to severe back pain from scoliosis. When the doctors refused to give me any more prescriptions, I turned to heroin to get the pain relief I needed.

My heroin addiction made it difficult to keep a job and take care of my two beautiful daughters, Hannah, 17, and Lexi, 12. I knew I desperately needed help, but had no idea how or where to get it. When DCFS intervened, I was just grateful that something was finally being done. My family took care of my daughters when I entered a 28-day drug treatment program at Heritage in December 2016.

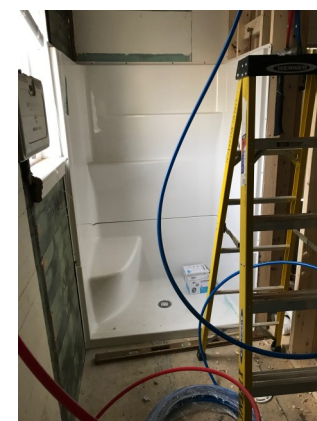
When I got out of rehab, I was on a methadone program and my daughters and I were all in a Youth Advocate program. Because the girls lived with my family, I wasn't allowed to live there and I had no income and nowhere to go. My brother was also homeless, and he and I both lived in my 2000 Mercury Grand Marquis. At least he had a job at Burger King, which paid for gas for the car. Youth Advocate connected me with God's Shelter of Love and I moved in on May 23, 2017. Lexi joined me at the shelter on May 30 and Hannah came on July 14.

God's Shelter required me to fill out four job applications every day, five days a week. I was highly motivated to get a job, because I knew that was the only way out for me and my girls, but it became discouraging after months of applying and being turned down. Finally, after more than three months of job seeking, I got a full-time job at FirsTech as a check processor, starting September 18.

The shelter has some restrictive rules, chores, and curfews, but they didn't bother me too much; I'm a homebody anyway. We all wanted a home of our own and at one time we thought living in Greenwood Apartments would at least afford us more space and privacy. Then everyone rejoiced with me on September 14 when I was approved for a Housing and Urban Development Section 8 voucher, to help pay rent on an apartment or house. This was great news to me, but God had something even better in store.

In September, 2017, three houses were donated to God's Shelter: one is being turned into the Careage House overnight shelter, one is going to be used for Room at the Inn, and the other they gave to me! Yes, I am a homeowner! Sure, my house needs some work, but I am happy to put in the work for something that belongs to me. November 19 was my last night sleeping in a homeless shelter. The new house even has a fenced-in yard and Lexi, Hannah, and I are thrilled that our dog Lucie is back with our family. Thanks to everyone who supports God's Shelter of Love – it was a God-send to me and my girls.

The *Careage* House, 234 S. College—bathroom renovations



Thank You to John Matthews, owner of Extreme Construction, for donating his time and work crew. Thanks to all of you who have provided special gifts to help us open this much needed overnight shelter!

Room at the Inn

244 W. Leafland, Decatur

We're very thankful for the opportunity to collaborate with Joyce Keller to relocate the Room at the Inn, an overnight shelter that's open on especially cold winter nights.



Blessingdales Thrift Shop

Christmas sales are going on throughout the month of December. Trees, wreaths, ornaments and other holiday decorations can be found at incredible prices!

We have a very large assortment of Christmas cards that are priced at only 10 cents each!

Shopping and donation hours are
9 am—4 pm, Monday-Saturday

God is good! As you read in Amber's story, GSOL was offered three houses in a period of about six weeks. The timing couldn't have been better as the need for emergency shelter for families, women and children has increased dramatically. Hands of Jesus reached out to us to see if we might have some use for their Agape House at 244 W Leafland. And of course, our answer was, "Yes," and "Thank You!" The Agape House will serve as the new location for the Room at the Inn in collaboration with Joyce Keller and Lee Taylor. Bathroom renovations at the Careage House, 234 S. College, are also coming nicely. Current and future projects include some electrical, flooring and furnishings. We hope to open the Room at the Inn and the Careage House in the near future.

It is not uncommon, when I have the opportunity to tell someone that we are in a unique position to give them a house, or offer them an apartment, or provide them with a vehicle, that they respond to me with great affection. I'm often caught off guard when given a hug or offered heartfelt words of kindness as if I am the giver of the gift. My response to that kind of affection is always the same - I make it clear that I am not the one to whom they should be so thankful. It is God, Himself, and His generous people to whom they should be so grateful. Friends, I feel honored to be in a position to touch so many lives with your generous gifts. God is good, and you who support God's Shelter of Love are evidence of His goodness. Thank you for partnering with us as, together, we transform lives through the love and power of Jesus Christ. *Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift! 2 Corinthians 9:15*

Wishing you a joyful Christmas season,

Ed Bacon, Director

Needs of the Shelter



- 2% milk
- butter and cheese
- ground beef
- chicken
- laundry detergent
& bleach
- paper towels, TP
and coffee



Executive Director: Ed Bacon, LPC
 Board President: Harold Batthauer
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 Larry Hughes, Warrensburg
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 Brenda Pride, Decatur
 Michael Reynolds, Decatur
 Greg Taylor, Clinton
 Dan Watkins, Mt. Zion



Many Thanks

to Grace United Methodist Church (left) and New Beginnings Church of God (below) for cleaning, painting, installing blinds, stripping wallpaper and working outside at the Careage House and our family shelter on Marietta St. Thank you, friends!



GOD'S SHELTER OF LOVE
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A big thank you to First Christian Church of Clinton (left) and Antioch Christian Church in Decatur (right) for bringing volunteers to work at Blessingdales. What a big help!

Would your church or service group like to volunteer at one of our shelters or at Blessingdales? Give us a call, (217) 422-2790 or send us an e-mail at Godsshelteroflove@gmail.com.

