

Comfort and Caring at Martha House

When women arrive at STEHM's Martha Houses, it is usually with almost nothing. They arrive from a variety of difficult circumstances, looking for a better future and ready to work for it. Our resident children are often challenged by living in unfamiliar surroundings and the uncertainty about what is happening. STEHM's goal is to bring stability and comfort, while sharing training and life skills that will prepare these families for successful independent living. This goal is achieved through a combination of our skilled staff, a caring community and a variety of educational programs and enrichment workshops. Here are just three examples of initiatives that enhanced the Martha House program this spring.



A selection of calming tools

Coping Skills Toolkit

Coping with challenges related to homelessness is difficult for even the toughest adults; imagine the impact on children. Not surprisingly, our resident children will often experience strong emotions (anger, fear, sadness, frustration), which they may not know how to process. To help these children and their mothers, a Coping Skills Toolbox was recently developed by Board Director Renate Flannelly, an experienced teacher and educator. The kit includes a variety of methods and items that can be used to calm and soothe and to help channel negative emotions in a positive manner. The box includes art supplies, calming music, books

about feelings, and directed breathing techniques using simple items such as a pillow, a counting chart, a pinwheel and an egg timer. And although the toolkit was assembled for the children, many of the tools and techniques offered can be used by and benefit all of the women living in the houses as well.



Enjoying a visit with Fred

Paws for People

In addition to monthly workshops and individual weekly sessions focusing on financial education for our women, family-oriented workshops are also a highlight. Recently residents enjoyed a session with Lois Brooks and her basset hound Fred from Paws for People, a non-profit organization that provides therapeutic visits to anyone who would benefit from interacting with a well-trained, loving pet. The chil-

dren were able to pet, brush and share snacks with Fred, as well as learn about the basset hound breed and how to care for a pet. They even read stories to Fred, which is a key component in Paws for People's program with children. The visit was a howling success and future visits with Fred and other therapy pets are being planned.

Girl Scout Silver Award Project

STEHM is so often blessed by the kindness of others in the community. In April, three young ladies from Girl Scout Troop 510 presented a wealth of personal care products for the women at our Martha Houses. Ava Delfin, Dayvey Gordon and Bridget McNamara collected the items as a service project in pursuit of the Girl Scout Leadership Silver Award. Their donations as well as their compassion and caring are greatly appreciated.



Girl Scouts helping others

Martha House Wish List Now on Amazon!

It's more convenient than ever to help provide the supplies needed to keep our Martha Houses running smoothly. Simply head to our website (www.stehm.org) and click on "Help Us" on the home page. On the Help Us page, you can click on the Wish List link to be taken directly to Amazon, where you will find items that are currently needed. Add one or more of the pictured items to your cart, select "Martha House" as the delivery address (under Other Addresses) and your items will be sent directly to STEHM.

And as always, when doing other shopping on Amazon, remember to make your purchase at [smile.Amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com). When you select STEHM as your charity, Amazon will automatically make a donation at no cost to you!

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About STEHM

Since 1986, Supportive Transitional and Emergency Housing Ministry (STEHM) has been serving the Wilmington, Delaware area by offering two housing solutions for individuals requiring shelter in an emergency situation or on a temporary basis.

The Motel Ministry provides short-term emergency housing for needy or displaced persons.

Martha House provides long-term transitional housing for women and their children, fostering the goal of independent living through counseling and life skills training in a safe, supportive environment. It strives to reintegrate individuals by encouraging self-sufficiency, addressing the fundamental causes of homelessness, poverty, joblessness and inability to find and maintain affordable housing.

Martha House provides children stability and access to uninterrupted schooling and social services, and reunifies families separated due to their social situations, the goal being to support a cohesive family environment and to encourage and reinforce family values.



stehm, inc.

*A Non-Profit Supportive Transitional
& Emergency Housing Ministry*

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Connect with us!



Springtime Blessings

Along with gratitude for these new initiatives, we are also so thankful for those loyal supporters who consistently come through for STEHM, year after year in so many ways.

- * The Brandywine Garden Club for the beautiful Easter baskets provided for the women and children at the Martha Houses and for working with residents to plant our urban vegetable garden. And a special shout-out to Andy Golian for cleaning out and preparing the garden beds for planting.
- * Kathy and John for generous regular donations of food and household supplies of every sort.

It is thanks to you and so many others that we have been able to continue this mission for 35 years.

Success Story: Heather's Fresh Start

Heather and her four children stayed at Martha House for about seven months. She had made the decision to leave an unhealthy relationship and was completely starting over with no support. Although currently unemployed, she hoped to secure a position with her past employer. Everything was set – and then the pandemic struck and we went into lock-down. Schools closed so the children were home studying online. Her office also closed and, as a result, she was unable to start back to work. But Heather got creative and did some

work from home and started selling a product line. She used the time to participate in the Financial Independence Program through West End House, and worked on credit restoration, establishing a budget and saving money. When the state opened up again, Heather promptly resumed her search for safe independent housing for her family and finally was able to find a nice townhouse. STEHM's Graduate Resident Incentive Program (GRIP) assisted her with funds for the security deposit, as well as two brand new mattresses and many household

items. Heather was excited for her family's future and happy to see that she had made the correct decision in starting over. She was also proud to have demonstrated to her children that, with hard work, she had been able to achieve her goal of independence. Our case manager has stayed in touch with Heather and the family is doing well. In addition, her oldest daughter who has a disability was able to return to living with them and now the family is reunited in their new home!