



Supportive Transitional & Emergency Housing Ministry

Spring/Summer 2020
STEHM is a 501(c)3 organization

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Responding to COVID-19: Working through the Pandemic

Homelessness does not stop for a pandemic. Despite the challenges presented by this unprecedented health crisis, STEHM has been working diligently to continue its mission safely and in compliance with all recommended guidelines.

In March, as COVID-19 took hold in our region, STEHM's Motel Ministry was temporarily suspended, until the social service agencies that refer clients to that program developed their own protocols to meet government requirements. As soon as that process was complete and the appropriate screenings were put in place, the ministry promptly resumed operations in April. Since then, our staff has maintained ongoing communication with those agencies and with our motel partners, fulfilling the need for emergency placements.

STEHM's dedicated and expert staff has managed to keep our Martha Houses running smoothly and, most importantly, safely. Government restrictions and social distancing guidelines required us to halt new admissions, but existing residents were able to continue sheltering in place. We have provided the homes with the necessary hygiene products and sanitation guidelines to ensure that our residents are fully equipped with the tools they need to keep themselves, and each other, safe. Staff has been alternating their hours in order to further restrict the number of persons in the homes at any one time.



Easter baskets donated by supporters

Despite the challenges, many aspects of the Martha House programs have been able to continue and it has been gratifying to see the commitment shown by our residents, staff and board. Most of our residents have been able to continue working throughout the lock-down period and are continuing to contribute to their normally required savings. Although in-person interviews and workshops were suspended, the certified financial counselor from Stand by Me has continued to work with residents individually via phone and email. Staff has worked to help current and former residents apply for and/or track down stimulus payments and provided information about other emergency assistance programs. Our Board of Directors and Executive Committee have met via online conference calls.

While these days have sometimes seemed dark and uncertain, our

blessings have been many. The Well Coffeehouse in Hockessin has provided occasional meals for our residents. Long-time supporters have provided supplies and made additional donations during this emergency period. Residents received beautiful Easter baskets, food donations and gift cards to purchase holiday meals. Even in this time of economic uncertainty, we have received grants from steadfast church, community, and corporate supporter, including Christ Church Christiana Hundred, Female Benevolent Society, the Lawton Trust, DuPont, and KPMG. We are so very fortunate to have such a wonderful and caring community supporting STEHM's mission.

And as spring turns to summer and we begin to emerge from this uncertain time, we look forward to even brighter days ahead. While maintaining social distance, Brandywine Garden Club members have once again cleaned out the garden beds, ready for this year's urban garden planting. A new backyard grill has been installed for residents, allowing them to cook and enjoy safer outdoor space. We know that we will still need to be cautious moving forward. But we are so grateful to have come through this period safely and able to continue our commitment to serve the homeless in our community. Now, more than ever, we are so thankful for your support, your concern and your prayers. We wish you and your loved ones continued safety and good health.

Hero Kids

Sometimes even young children can be true heroes. Earlier this year, STEHM was blessed by the kindness of students at Hillendale Elementary School in Chadds Ford, PA, and Cooke Elementary School in Hockessin, DE.

Hillendale students invited STEHM to participate in their MLK Day "Day of Giving" event. On that day, students and parents were invited to a special sort of "school fair" to

learn about the work of four small local nonprofits, including STEHM. Children participated in the event by creating cards and bringing donations. STEHM Board members Kathy Bevans and Mary Ann Marshall attended, bringing displays and brochures and answering questions.

First-grade students at Cooke Elementary adopted STEHM/Martha House for their "100th Day of" *(continued other side)*



Board members Mary Ann Marshall and Kathy Bevans at Hillendale "Day of Giving"

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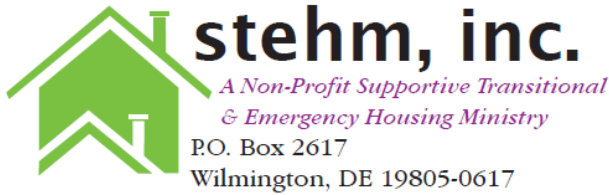
About STEHM

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.



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Hero Kids *(Continued)*

School” project. The goal was to collect 100 items always in need at Martha House – soaps, toilet papers, sponges, deodorant, etc. As it turned out, the children were so excited and generous that they collected over 300 items!

Through both events, children and their parents learned more about



Cooke Elementary teacher and student with “100th Day” donations

those facing homelessness in our community and demonstrated such kindness and compassion. We are so grateful to these students, their parents and their schools for their interest and their generosity toward those in need. It is clear that the future is, indeed, in good hands!

Denice and her three children resided at Martha House for about 13 months. Although Denice had been steadily employed for 11 years, as a single mother, finances were a continuing challenge that eventually caught up with her. When she came to Martha House, she was anxious to use her time there to get back on track. Following the Financial Independence Program at West End Neighborhood House, she worked diligently to pay off debts, increase

A Family's Fresh Start

her credit score, stay within her budget and save for the future. After much patience and planning, Denice was ready to move into independent housing with her family. STEHM assisted her with her security deposit and provided two brand-new mattresses and other household items to help get her started in her new home. Denice stated that she was forever grateful for her experience at Martha House, giving her an opportunity to grow as

a person and a mother and giving her family the opportunity to make a fresh start. Six months later she returned to Martha House to speak with current residents, telling them about her time in the program and providing encouragement and inspiration for other women still on their own journey from homelessness to independent living.