

Ecumenical Partnership for Housing

Give them roots and create wings.

July 2015



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What is VEST?

VEST is an acronym for **Vision Execution and Support Services Team**. It is one of the eight EPH committees working behind the scenes to achieve our vision; helping our families achieve knowledge, skills and wholeness for a self-sufficient future.

The VEST team dives deeper to determine the barriers and needs of our families with the goal of finding solutions. The team is made up of Board members, The Salvation Army (TSA) case managers, and family advocates.

Imagine a single-parent family with two children. The mother goes back to school, passes a test for certification in her area of study, and accepts a full-time job. So, what major barriers does that mother face?

- A salary that is below what is identified as the "poverty wage" for an adult and two children in Brown County, WI.
- Requiring child care, which consumes the majority of her salary.
- Needing transportation that is essentially not available throughout our community, after 9:00 PM, or on Sunday.

Actually, you don't have to imagine such a family. This is an EPH family, working full-time at \$8.00 an hour, paying \$6.00 an hour for child care, and using a combination of bus and taxi transportation to bring the children to child care and get to work.

Other barriers faced by our families include affordable housing, access to medical and mental health resources, past debt, and a limited or inadequate family support system.

These are real issues for our families, and the VEST Committee continues to work on ways to remove, reduce, or eliminate these barriers to self-sufficiency.

Celebration Dinner & Awards

This year's Celebration Dinner was held on April 27th at the St. Norbert Bemis center. The evening started with a social hour to meet and share with other volunteers from partnership churches. Attendance this year was 98, creating an atmosphere for great conversation between all those in attendance.

Highlights from the celebration include starting the evening with prayer and thanking God for the success of our families and their journeys. This was followed by the President's welcome and EPH's vision for the future. A story of success was provided by Kim and her son Zeke. It was inspiring to hear how she maintained her commitment to her education, employment and her son, while working toward self-sufficiency. Today Kim is a great single mom and successful grade school teacher.

Finally, last year EPH created the Duane Howell Service Award to be given to an EPH volunteer who has gone above and beyond the call of duty. This year's recipient was Diane Pietenpol. Diane has been an EPH supporter and volunteer for over 10 years. She has shared her many talents and her time to help EPH families on the road to self-sufficiency. EPH was proud to recognize a woman of such character and kindness who truly is bringing salt and light to the world.



Duane Howell
Service Award
recipient,
Diane Pietenpol

FAQ

How has the response been to the Direct Mail Campaign?

- As of June 30th, we are at 80% of our goal. This campaign supports the ongoing operational needs of EPH, including the maintenance, upkeep and utilities for the homes families stay in; as well as support services for our families; including staff and general administrative costs. Many thanks for your generosity and commitment to our ministry.

What trends are we seeing with our families?

- There are increased opportunities within our community for situationally homeless families to get back on their feet fairly quickly, enabling them to by-pass transitional housing. This is great for our community and those families. The impact on EPH and our Salvation Army partner is that the families we are serving are the families who have multiple barriers and more challenging life situations. We play a significant role within our community in meeting the needs of these families, many of which have experienced generational poverty.

What can I do to help?

- We don't ask often enough for your prayers. Please include our families in your prayers – not only for their journey toward self-sufficiency, but also on their spiritual journey. We believe families who are intentional about their spiritual journeys have a greater likelihood of success.

Ecumenical Partnership for Housing
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Like us on Facebook for up-to-date information on EPH and our involvement in the community.

EPH Vision Statement

Through EPH sponsored transitional housing, extensive case management and caring support services, families achieve the knowledge, skills and “wholeness” for a self-sufficient future.

LEARN HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT EPH AT EPHGB.ORG