

Turning a House into a Home

Agency: Furniture Mission

Service: Utilizes over 100 referral sources to distribute gently used furniture to families and individuals. Furniture Mission can provide delivery of the furniture if needed and they accept donations of furniture from community members and businesses.

Need: In Sioux Falls a single parent with two children in Sioux Falls would need to earn \$14.42 per hour to meet their family's needs and in a two-parent family each adult would need to earn \$8.46 per hour. 10% of families in Sioux Falls are at or below the poverty line (a family of four making \$20,000).

Impact: 2,128 families and individuals were provided with furniture in 2008, making their homes warm, nurturing environments where they can feel safe and comfortable.

Pause for a moment and imagine uprooting your family from your home, selling all of your belongings, moving to a city you are unfamiliar with, where you know only a handful of others. Now imagine that once you got to this city that the home you had planned to move in to was no longer available for you.

This was the situation Winifreida and her five children found themselves in after moving to Sioux Falls. While her husband is serving in Iraq, they had to make the decision to leave their home to be closer to her children's grandmother in Sioux Falls.

"Our situation in our home town was bad," said Winifreida. "So my husband agreed it would be best for us to sell what we couldn't pack and move here to be closer to my children's grandmother."

While her situation upon arriving in Sioux Falls wasn't ideal, the city quickly embraced her family. "My children's grandmother referred us to a local shelter our second day here," continues Winifreida. "From there we received assistance with food, clothing, and more. I was amazed how friendly and helpful everyone was."

After two weeks, she was able to receive assistance to make a deposit on a two bedroom apartment for her family. But with no furniture to move in, their new place did not feel like a home.

"I had never slept on a floor before," said Winifreida. "It was a different experience."

That is where the Furniture Mission was able to help, providing enough beds for all of the family members, as well as a sofa, dresser, chair, bedding, blankets and more.

This unique program collects gently used furniture from community members and distributes it through a referral process. Use of the program grew 13% in 2008 and thanks to support from Sioux Empire United Way, over 2100 families and individuals were provided with furniture.

The program gives hope to families like Winifreida's, "When my husband returns from Iraq, he will truly be returning to a home."



Winifreida and her children are happy to have a new home and beds.