

Doing the Right Thing

Agency: Inter-Lakes
Community Action
Partnership

Program:
Heartland House

Service: Provides transitional housing for homeless families with children. In addition to providing a place to live, Heartland House also provides assistance with food, employment, education, medical treatment, and a wide variety of other needs.

Need: According to the 2007 Homeless Consortium Survey, 1026 men, women and children in South Dakota are homeless. In Minnehaha County alone, 648 people are homeless, representing 63% of the state's homeless.

Impact: 63 families participated in the program in 2008. The program helps families move toward self-sufficiency, improve parenting and living skills, and help their children receive high-quality child development services in the agency's child care center.

"Every choice you make will have a consequence," Darcy's father would often tell her. "The consequence can be good or bad, but there is a repercussion for everything."

Darcy fully understood this statement three years ago, when an addiction to meth caught up to her, a single mother of two, broke, and about to become homeless.

"I finally realized that my choices had led me to where I was," Darcy says. "In August of 2004, I gave my life to God, and that was my first step to getting clean."

Darcy started the process of overcoming her drug addiction, but was still faced with a large amount of debt, and a possible eviction from her apartment. She received a recommendation to try the Heartland House. The program provides transitional housing to families with children. The program includes intensive case work that helps the families with education, employment, finances and more.

"My case worker helped me to stay on track, stay focused," continues Darcy. "I was able to find confidence in myself, and realized that I could make it on my own."

Through the education and assistance provided at Heartland House, Darcy has started to pursue a degree in Accounting and plans to graduate this spring. She was also able to put the program's budgeting assistance to work and pay off her debts. Due to her hard work and determination, Darcy graduated from the program after two years. She recently got married and is starting a new life with her family.

"The program gave me the confidence to realize that I could do it on my own," says Darcy. "I was able to take all that was bad in my life and make it good."

Thanks to the Sioux Empire United Way, 63 families participated in the Heartland House program in 2008. There are 35 different apartments available for families at two different locations.

The program provides stability to families like Darcy's, "It's like my dad always said, everyone has to make choices. You have to have the willingness to want to do the right thing, the willingness to choose the right thing, and the willingness to do the right thing."

