

A Fresh Start

Agency: Inter-Lakes
Community Action

Program: Heartland House I
and II

Service: The program provides homeless families with children with low-cost housing, combined with intensive family case management and access to high-quality, affordable childcare and early childhood development services. Participants learn appropriate parenting, living, employment and other needed skills during their time with the program.

Need: A family of four needs to make at least \$16/hour to maintain their household. There are 2600 people on the waiting list for housing assistance and 1600 households already receiving assistance.

Impact: All participants create and complete a comprehensive self-sufficiency plan with the assistance of Case Managers. All participants complete parenting and living skills training. 75% of participants improved their self-sufficiency through education/employment and improved their debtor status through money management skills. 80% of participants improved parenting and living skills. These skills create self-sufficient, happier, and healthier families that join our community.

We all need a helping hand once in a while. And that time was two years ago for Jill. She had just moved to Sioux Falls to receive assistance overcoming chemical dependency.

“I moved here hoping for a fresh start, but how do you begin with nothing,” Jill explained in a whisper, her eyes welling with tears. “That’s when I found my fresh start, when I found the Heartland House.”

Heartland House is a housing program for homeless families. The program provides participants with the tools to achieve self-sufficiency.

“At first I was walking six miles to work every day. But I had to work,” she said as she cracked a small smile. “I’ve come a long way since then.”

In the last two years, Jill has paid off her debt, purchased a reliable car, and is now in her second year at South East Technical Institute. She is currently maintaining an A/B average in Criminal Justice. Jill hopes to become a Juvenile Probation Officer when she graduates in the spring.

Thanks to money from Sioux Empire United Way, over 60 families will be able to get back on their feet through Heartland House I & II in 2008. These families now have the tools to continue happy, healthy, and productive lives in our community.

Families like Jill’s, “If it wasn’t at Heartland House I don’t know where I would be. The help and the support of the community and Heartland House have gotten me to where I am today.”