

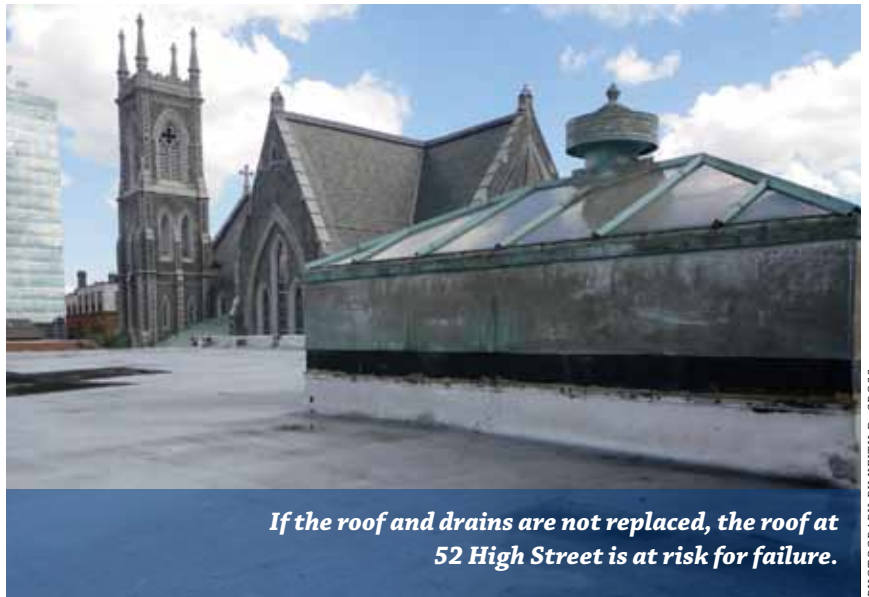
Editors: Sarah Lange & Alex Kartheiser Contact: alex@abbyshouse.org Online: WWW.ABBYSHOUSE.ORG/BRIGHTSPOT

## Raise the Roof!

by Sarah Lange

Imagine having nowhere to sleep. To eat. To bathe. Now imagine trying to raise your children in these conditions. In MA, approximately 95% of homeless families are comprised of a single mother and several young children, usually under the age of ten. Homelessness isn't just about not having a place to live—it impacts an individual's social, emotional, medical, developmental, educational and occupational status, as well. Homeless women and children demonstrate higher rates of mental health issues and problem behaviors, have poorer developmental and health outcomes, and over the long run, suffer

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If the roof and drains are not replaced, the roof at 52 High Street is at risk for failure.

PHOTOGRAPH BY KEITH D. CROSS

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### HIGHLIGHTS

## Recent Events

### Abby's House Shelter Receives a Paint-over!

Last summer, Abby's House was selected as the MA winner of the Color Care Across America contest! The goal of the contest – organized by the US Conference of Mayors, Benjamin Moore Paints, and the Paint and Decorating Contractors of America – was to paint the interior of one homeless shelter in each state. Abby's House was selected from scores of applications.

The week before Thanksgiving, a crew of professional painters volunteered their time to transform the 1st floor of the shelter. The walls – which were covered with '80s wallpaper – were prepared, primed and painted in less than a day and a half. As a result, the shelter now looks much brighter, cheerier and

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### WOMEN'S STORIES

## A New Chapter Begins

"Hey lady!" These are the two words I hear at least once a day when Tawny stops in the hallway to pop her head into my office. "Hey Tawny how are you?" "Good, good!" she smiles.

Tawny has been a resident here at Abby's for almost a year now. Tawny is a positive and bubbly person, with a "go-getter" attitude, and is dedicated to her work and commitments. Not only is she fun to be around, she is supportive of the other women and shares her story to help others. There's no doubt, Tawny is a survivor.

Tawny's drug use started when she was young. Like many young people, she enjoyed hanging out with friends, going out, partying and having fun. Then someone introduced her to crack cocaine, which marked the beginning of her long struggle with addiction. She entered a drug rehab facility for the third time 2 years ago and has been sober ever since.

*"Before, when I entered rehab, it was for my mother, or to get my family back, but the last time I went it was for me. I lost myself to drugs for awhile, but now I've gotten to know the real Tawny."*

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## Smile!

More photos of recent events inside!



Norm Fuller, Worcester Mayor Joe O'Brien, John Lanzillotti of Benjamin Moore, Kathy Ewing, and Annette Rafferty attended the Color Care Across American press conference held at the Abby's House shelter.

## Upcoming Events

### In 2012 we'll reach our 36th Anniversary

In June, Abby's House will be celebrating its 36th Anniversary—stay tuned for details!

### Thrift Shop Vintage Parlour!

The Thrift Shop Vintage Parlour will be open from 10:00 am - 3:00 p.m. on:

April 3, 10, 17 and 24

May 7, 14, 21 and 28

June 6, 13, 20 and 27

July 12, 19 and 26

August 7, 14, 21 and 28

For more information about the Thrift Shop, visit our website:

[www.abbyshouse.org](http://www.abbyshouse.org)

## BUDGET REPORT FY12

### Current Progress

As of Feb. 28, 2012 Abby's House has raised \$215,729 of its \$1.2M budget.



## Necessities

Prior to organizing a food or clothing drive, and to coordinate the drop-off of donations Please contact Julie Komenos at (508) 756-5486 ext. 17. Please visit our website for a complete list of our needs.

### HOUSEHOLD ITEMS    GIFT CARDS

- Clorox Wipes
- Walmart
- Tin Foil
- Target
- Tissues
- CVS
- Toilet Paper
- Dunkin Donuts
- Windex
- Walgreens
- Bathroom Cleaner
- Price Rite
- Paper Towels
- Price Chopper
- Sponges
- Stop & Shop
- Saran Wrap
- Bus passes
- Gas cards

## RAISE THE ROOF! from Page 1

from a lack of educational, vocational and economic success, which places these women and their children at continued risk for homelessness. At Abby's House, we strive to put an end to this cycle by providing shelter, housing and advocacy.

At present, Abby's House is facing a significant challenge: the roof at 52 High Street—where 55 of our 78 units of affordable housing are located—is in need of immediate replacement. Built in the early 1900s, 52 High Street has a 8,500 square foot roof. Between 2007 - 2010, Abby's House repaired and patched the roof in an effort to delay replacement.

There are signs of ongoing deterioration of both the roof and the underlying wooden roof decks. If the roof and drains are not replaced, the roof could collapse. Our architects are recommending immediate replacement (*see sidebar*). The total estimated cost of this project is \$300,000, or \$35/sq. ft.

Replacing the roof will prevent further damage to the underlying roof deck, structural supports and ultimately, the collapse of the roof. The new roof will also result in a significant increase in energy efficiency. According to our architect, we are currently losing as much as 50% of our heat through the roof! At present, Abby's House spends nearly \$40,000 per year on heat. Installing a new roof will help us save significantly on these costs. Most importantly, replacing the roof will preserve 55 units of safe, decent, affordable housing for low-income women.

On average, we receive 15-20 calls per day. The women who arrive at our door have exhausted their resources, having already lived with family, friends, or in their car. The vast majority of women who turn to us for help have suffered some sort of trauma—molestation, abuse, rape, assault, and/or domestic violence—and often have accompanying mental health and/or substance abuse problems. Twenty percent of our residents have disabilities, predominantly psychiatric. At Abby's House, we provide

a safe place in which woman can recognize her own inner strengths and abilities. We provide our residents with resources, information and support so they can regain their footing on the path to independence. By working with a woman to develop an individualized service plan, we help her move into a place of confidence and empowerment. This model has helped more than 11,500 women to succeed. Preserving the 55 units at 52 High Street will enable us to continue this important work.

### An architectural team performed a study of the roof which uncovered the following problems:

- There is evidence on the 4th floor of long-term leaks around the main building roof drains.
- In the back portion of the building, the underlying roof insulation is soggy and mechanical roof fasteners protrude above—and in some cases through—the existing roof membrane.
- The roof drain in the back portion of the building has, in the past, become blocked, allowing water to accumulate above ankle height level, which created additional damage.

Today, Abby's House is still a trusted community leader, with a base of more than 3,000 donors and more than 200 volunteers. We hope that you will help us preserve Abby's place in the community by making a contribution to the Raise the Roof campaign today. To do so, please go to our website ([www.abbyshouse.org](http://www.abbyshouse.org)) and use the orange "donate" button on the homepage. When completing your PayPal transaction, please write "roof" on the description line. If you would prefer, you can send your check—payable to Abby's House—to Sarah Lange, 52 High Street, Worcester, MA 01609. Please write "roof" in the memo line. \*

# Raise THE Roof

From Oct. 1, 2011 thru Feb. 28, 2012 we've raised \$104,589 toward the \$300,000 it will cost to replace the roof at 52 High Street. The project costs \$35/square foot, please consider making a special contribution today!



*Members of Abby's House and the Worcester Women's History Project travelled to Seneca Falls, NY to witness Abby Kelley Foster's induction into the National Women's Hall of Fame.*

**LOOKING AT THE ISSUES:**

## The Roots & Impact of Homelessness

Homelessness isn't just about having no place to sleep, eat, or bathe. As you read in the roof story, the effects of homelessness on women and children are significant and long-lasting. Since the mid-'80s, single mothers and their children have been filling out the ranks of the homeless in disproportionate numbers in comparison to any other population.

Non-profit housing and homeless agencies – who have also suffered from budget cuts – are doing the best they can to meet the increased demand for shelter and affordable housing. If we are truly to change the picture for the homeless – especially single mothers and their children – we must address the root causes that pave the path to homelessness. We encourage all of our Abby's House supporters to advocate for more affordable housing and living wage jobs so that we can change the outlook and the outcomes for single mothers and their children. ★

### Conditions Driving the Trend of Increased Numbers of Homeless Single Mothers with Young Children

- Significant cuts in the US Dept. of Housing and Urban Development's budget
- Major cuts in state and local housing budgets
- Substantial cuts to public assistance programs
- A shortage of 7,000 units of affordable housing in Worcester alone
- A downturned economy in which many jobs have been eliminated or work hours reduced
- The increased number of foreclosures on both private homes and multi-unit buildings
- Women earn only 74 cents to every dollar a man earns
- Single mothers tend to be more economically vulnerable than their married peers

### The Four "Pinch Points" on the Path to Homelessness

1. A shortage of housing resources, which precipitates a loss of permanent housing
2. Residential mobility that destabilizes families
3. Discrimination in the housing market that constrains housing choices
4. Multiple stressors that demoralize an already vulnerable family system

## Your Voice Matters!

Abby's House is launching a strategic planning process to chart a course for the coming years and we need your input! Please complete our survey at: <http://www.abbyshouse.org/spsurvey>.

Thanks in advance for your participation and valuable input!

## RECENT EVENTS *from Page 1*

updated. This will make a world of difference to the homeless women and children who turn to Abby's House for help. We'd like to thank Mayor Joe O'Brien, Norm Fuller and John Lanzillotti from Benjamin Moore, John Ord and the rest of the volunteer painters from the Paint and Decorating Contractors of America - MA Chapter, as well as Matt Epstein at Economy Paints for making the "paint-over" a reality!

### Abby Kelley Foster Inducted into Two Halls of Fame

In the year of her 200th birthday and after several attempts, Abby Kelley Foster received long-overdue national recognition. On October 1, 2011, Abby Kelley Foster – after whom Abby's House is named – was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame, in Seneca Falls, NY. The event was attended by several staff from Abby's House and members of the Worcester Women's History Project. On October 22, she was inducted into the Abolitionist Hall of Fame in Peterboro, NY. According to the Worcester Women's History Project, "These were the two driving moral causes that motivated Abby's life: equality between the sexes and the abolition of slavery – with full racial equality." We're happy that Abby is getting the recognition she so deserves!

### Holiday Open House

On December 8, Abby's House held a Holiday Open House to show off the newly-refurbished shelter. The event – attended by more than 50 people – was great fun! Many people who attended donated items from the Holiday Needs List or presents for the women. Thanks, everyone! ★



*Supporters (L to R) Karen Bernacki, Katherine Bendre, and Yvonne Thibeault visited the shelter during our Holiday Open House.*



52 High Street, Worcester, MA 01609

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## Recent Grants

All Grants were received between 10/1/11 - 3/22/12

- Agnes M. Lindsay Trust
- Boston Foundation
- CCR Charitable Foundation
- Citizens Bank
- CMB Wireless Group
- Dale Foundation
- Esther's Project/Sisters of St. Anne
- Fred Harris Daniels Foundation
- George Alden Trust
- George F. & Sybil H. Fuller Foundation
- Greater Worcester Community Foundation  
*(multiple funds)*
- Hermann Foundation
- Melvin S. Cutler Charitable Fund
- People's United Community Foundation
- Reliant Medical Group Foundation
- Saint Gobain
- St. Francis Community Health Care, Inc.
- Stoddard Charitable Trust
- The 200 Foundation
- TJX

# GO GREEN

We are developing an E-Newsletter version of "Bright Spot". To receive the latest information about Abby's House, please contact Alexandra Kartheiser, Communications Coordinator at [alex@abbyshouse.org](mailto:alex@abbyshouse.org) or call 508.756.5486 ext. 35. YOU CAN ALSO SIGN UP ONLINE AT [WWW.ABBYSHOUSE.ORG](http://WWW.ABBYSHOUSE.ORG)!

## NEW CHAPTER from Page 1

After graduating from the program, Tawny sought a safe, sober facility with a supportive atmosphere. She chose Abby's House.

*"Abby's House helps in a lot of ways. Katrina worked with me when I became unemployed. I didn't have to move out. I feel safe here and I would recommend this place to anybody."*

Since then, Tawny has courageously rebuilt her life. She was offered a job at UMASS Hospital and her relationship with her children has never been better. In addition, she is able to have a direct relationship with her 5 granddaughters!

Most impressive is Tawny's determination to move forward. She has used her time at Abby's to save money and stabilize her life. She

will be moving into her own apartment in the next few weeks!

These are important steps on the road to independence and Tawny is grateful for the support she received while at Abby's House.

I'll miss Tawny's daily greeting, but I take solace in knowing that she is moving on to an exciting new chapter of her life. ✨

This coupon good for

# 20% OFF

your entire clothing purchase at the  
**ABBY'S HOUSE VINTAGE PARLOUR.**

COUPON EXPIRES: AUGUST 21, 2012

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