

Fall/Winter 2023

From Dreams to Hope

Finding my Home - A Story of Safety by Jaqueline



Born and raised in South America, I cherished my time with family and friends but always dreamed of the opportunity to come to the United States. However, my family's financial circumstances made leaving home a distant dream. A glimmer of hope emerged when I learned about an exchange program where I could go to the United States. After months of anticipation, I received news that I qualified for this life-changing program. I knew I had to take this opportunity to grow as an individual where opportunities are limitless. I could not pass this up.

I was immersed in a world of eye-opening experiences during the program. It was a period of incredible personal growth and reflection. I knew I wanted to stay in the United States and continue my journey.

I secured a teaching position in Massachusetts, and it felt like I was finally on the right path. However, this time, the circumstances were extremely different. During the program, I had everything I needed – I had made friends, I had my own room, and I had people to guide me. Now, I was on my own. I rented a small apartment using my little savings, hoping it would be enough until my teaching job took off.

Reality hit hard as I realized that my job alone couldn't cover the rising costs of rent, utilities, healthcare, and basic essentials like food and

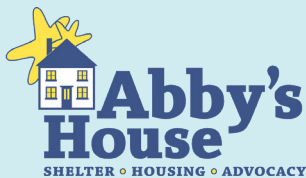
medication. I worked tirelessly, putting in overtime to make ends meet, but it was exhausting and discouraging. The financial strain was overwhelming, and my dreams were no longer possible.

Then came the crushing news – my rent was set to increase, and if I couldn't afford it, I would be forced to leave. My stability crumbled beneath my feet, and despair set in. Desperate, I scoured listings for affordable housing but found no safe options. With each passing day, my deadline drew closer, and I faced the grim prospect of becoming homeless in Massachusetts. The weight of it all took a severe toll on my mental health, and I was at my lowest point.

In my search for a lifeline, I stumbled upon Abby's House. Nervously, I reached out to them, not knowing what to expect. Walking through the doors, I was immediately enveloped by a warm and welcoming atmosphere. I sat down with the Women's Service Team and poured my heart out, sharing my journey and my desperate need for assistance. They listened, truly listened, to my story, and I felt seen, valued, and respected.

Because of you, I found a place to call home at Abby's House, an affordable sanctuary that gave me stability, safety, dignity, and hope. Abby's House restored my sense of belonging and gave me the assurance that I had a home in the United States. I now have an apartment to call my own, where I cultivate independence and self-reliance. Abby's House not only provided me with shelter and support but also highlighted the importance of affordable housing in the Worcester community.

At Abby's House, women like me get the chance to rebuild, heal, and thrive. I will never forget the people and chosen family who have made the biggest difference in my life.



52 High Street
Worcester, MA 01609
Phone: 508-756-5486
www.abbyshouse.org



Annette Rafferty
Founder

Julie Orozco
Executive Director

Board of Directors

Laurie Matosky, *President*
Jennifer Dragon, *Vice President*
Janine Diliberto, *Treasurer*
Eva Akese, *Assistant Treasurer*
Samantha McGill, *Clerk*
Samantha Jepson, *Assistant Clerk*
Deborah Bieri
Dr. Adriana DiPasquale
Terry M. Dorsey
Tyrenna Gaines
Gerri Lorusso
Rosibel Perez Torres
Jennifer Romeo-Porcaro
Paula J. Sasso
Jayna Turchek
Jacqueline Williams

Bright Spot

Vol. 42, Issue 3
November 2023
Published three times per year

Mission Statement

The mission of Abby's House is to provide shelter and affordable housing, as well as advocacy and support services, to homeless, battered, and low-income women, with or without children.

Vision Statement

Abby's House empowers the women we serve to lead self-directed lives filled with dignity and hope.



Seasons Greetings

From Executive Director, Julie Orozco

As the year comes to a close, I find myself reflecting on our journey since I joined Abby's House in June.

The work done in 2023 prior to my arrival continues to amaze and inspire me. I am so grateful to have individuals who continually uplift the resilience of Abby's House residents and guests.

We celebrated the Shelter Groundbreaking Ceremony on October 24, 2023, where city and state officials, community members, Abby's House volunteers, former guests, and staff gathered together to celebrate the Shelter renovation. During that moment, it was clear to me how committed the Abby's House community is since founder, Annette Rafferty welcomed the first shelter guest 47 years ago. Here we are today, embarking on the next era of her legacy.

Your presence within the Abby's House community continues to be a beacon of light, providing comfort and strength to those who need it most. I am profoundly grateful for your continued dedication and support, and I look forward to the opportunities that the upcoming year will bring, knowing that together, we can continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve.

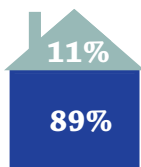
May the Abby's House community be filled with an abundance of kindness and warmth during this holiday season.

Sincerely,



Julie Orozco
Executive Director

Program Funding



As of November 1, 2023, we still need to raise 11% of the total operating budget of \$2,735,146.

Help us raise \$289,807 before December 31, 2023.

to meet our mission and fully fund the shelter, housing, and advocacy services for women & children.

Mark Your Calendars for

#GIVINGTUESDAY™

Giving Tuesday is observed on the Tuesday after Thanksgiving. It is a global giving movement created to give thanks and inspire people to donate their time, talents, and treasure to better their communities! Help us meet the goal of raising \$10,000 to support the Annette Rafferty Survive to Thrive Fund (ARST) by donating to Abby's House on Tuesday, November 28th at abbyshouse.org and visit our social media pages to hear how your generosity is felt here every day!

Your gift ensures women and children don't have to face financial barriers while working towards self-sufficiency.

Shelter Groundbreaking Ceremony

Marking the Advancement of Safety and Security

On October 24, 2023 Abby's House commemorated the Shelter Renovation with a Groundbreaking Ceremony. Though the renovation started in August, it was important to showcase the impact that the renovated shelter will have in the Worcester community, specifically in the Crown Hill neighborhood.

City Councilor, Sarai Rivera, shared about growing up in the Crown Hill neighborhood by saying, "Abby's House has always been part of the community – part of the neighborhood. It was never just seen as a shelter. It's more than just a place to stay, it is place women can consider home. Abby's House has made a profound impact in this community and in this neighborhood and we are forever grateful."



Set to double the current capacity, the shelter will accommodate the growing demand for vital services to mitigate homelessness experienced by women and children in the community. Executive Director Julie Orozco highlighted the pivotal changes, including the integration of 18 beds and improved accessibility. The renovated facility will have a ground floor designed to be fully accessible, featuring a spacious bathroom and a ramp for easy entry as well as enhanced layout that ensures better visibility for mothers preparing meals, allowing them to keep an eye on their children as they go about their daily routines.

"This building is not just bricks and mortars," said Senator Robyn Kennedy. "This is home and it is so incredibly important that we make sure that home reflects the dignity, the respect, the opportunity for self-confidence and self-growth that every single member of our community deserves and has the right to have."

As Abby's House prepares to unveil its expanded shelter in late spring, the unwavering dedication to providing support for women and children in need remains at the forefront.

Mayor Joseph Petty reflects on the housing crisis by saying, "Housing is probably one of the most important issues we face here in the City of Worcester. All this plays into one big picture, making sure people are safe every single night – that they have place to rest their heads in the City of Worcester."

As the late spring opening approaches, Abby's House stands poised to continue its legacy of empowerment, resilience, and compassionate service to those who need it most in within the Worcester community, acknowledging that affordable housing is a right - not just a privilege.

View photos of the event at <https://flic.kr/s/aHBqjAZGak>

Wearing Smooth the Path

Founder, Annette Rafferty, is currently seeking copies of her books "Wearing Smooth the Path – 25 years at Abby's House" and "Still Wearing Smooth the Path – 10 more years at Abby's House". With limited copies printed, Annette is looking to preserve the history of Abby's House with these books.

If you possess a copy, donate it back by emailing info@abbyshouse.org.



Presented by:



Co-Presenting Sponsor:



Thank You!

Because of supporters like you, more than \$79,794 was raised at this year's 14th Annual Abby's House 5K to support the women and children who call Abby's House home! Thank you to everyone who helped make this event a success. Together, we will continue to work diligently to support the mission, as well as the residents and guests who call Abby's House home.

View photos of the event at abbyshouse.org/event/14th-annual-abbys-house-hybrid-5k-run-walk/

Special thanks to Patti McKone, 5K Committee Chair and the entire Planning Committee!

Get Involved At Abby's House!



Abby's House is community of people working collectively to achieve its mission. **Your contributions of time, talent, and treasure make an impact in the lives of the women and children.**

Together, we can continue to build a safe, supportive community for women and children at Abby's House.

Make A Gift:

Your gift makes it possible for women and children to dream of a hopeful future. Once safely housed, women develop a plan to avoid future homelessness and housing insecurity. To make a gift, visit abbyshouse.org/donate.

Set up monthly recurring gifts to guarantee a bright future for the women and children of Abby's House.

Donate Needed Items:

To fully serve the women who come through our doors each year, Abby's House relies on donated items from the community. To view the complete list of our most urgent needs, visit abbyshouse.org/getinvolved/donate-needed-items

Volunteer:

Volunteers have been at the heart of Abby's House since the beginning. Work in the Thrift Shop, hold workshops or teach a class. To learn more, visit abbyshouse.org/get-involved/volunteer

Give a Gift This Holiday Season!

Women are in need of the following new items.

Gift cards such as:

- Target
- Amazon
- Price Chopper
- Gala Foods Supermarket
- Market Basket
- Walmart
- Gas Cards
- Dollar Tree
- Prepaid Visa/Mastercard

Holiday gifts such as:

- Hats, gloves, scarves and cozy socks
- Solid, neutral-colored towel sets
- Bath robes (S-4x) & slippers (7-11)
- Pots and pans
- Travel/insulated coffee mugs
- Solid, neutral-colored twin comforters
- Sewing/First aid kits
- Self Care items: nail polish, face masks
- Craft kits for adults

To view more needed holiday items, shop our Amazon Wishlist, and to view information on scheduling a drop off, visit abbyshouse.org/get-involved/donate-needed-items.

To organize a holiday needs drive or for more information, contact Kathleen Suchenski at kathleen@abbyshouse.org | 508-756-5486 x227.

Join the Legacy Circle!

As a Legacy Circle member, you imagine your world beyond the present.

The Legacy Circle honors individuals who have included Abby's House in their will or trust. By including Abby's House in your estate plans, you will make a profound difference in the lives of women and children at risk of experiencing homelessness and leave a permanent legacy for your loved ones.

This flexible gift option can be revised at any time and can be made as a specific amount or a percentage of your estate—allowing you to also take care of your family. In addition, your gift may entitle your estate to estate tax charitable deductions.

To arrange a personal conversation or for more information on joining the Legacy Circle, contact Associate Director of Development, Jennifer Spicer at Jennifer@abbyshouse.org or call (508)756-5486 x239.

A Legacy of Support and Hope

As we celebrate this holiday season, we warmly embrace the cherished memories of the long-time supporters of Abby's House who have graced our journey in 2023, leaving behind a legacy of compassion, kindness, generosity, and unwavering commitment. Contributions from memorial and tribute gifts have amounted to a generous total of **\$40,243** in 2023. Plan your legacy by joining the Legacy Circle, where your commitment will make a difference in the lives of women and children.