

Life-Changing Housing For Women

Thanks to Your Dedication to the Mission of Abby's House

The City of Worcester has seen a lot of growth within the past few years with new apartment complexes, businesses, a planned baseball stadium for the Worcester Red Sox (WooSox), and more. While this renaissance is certainly revitalizing the City, there is still a major disconnect with the needs of many residents in the City - the need for more safe, affordable housing.

According to the National Low-Income Housing Coalition's "Out of Reach: 2019" report, the market rate for a one-bedroom apartment in Worcester is \$946 a month. If a woman is working a minimum wage job at \$12/hour, she'd have to work a minimum of 61 hours per week just to afford her apartment. That's why Abby's House took on the major renovation project at 52 High Street - so 55 women who are low-income and would otherwise be homeless would have a safe, affordable, and supportive place to live. A home where they have access to healthy meals and a thrift shop, where advocates can connect them to services that address their needs, and where they can obtain new skills like financial literacy. Most importantly, Abby's House is a place where empowerment is fostered and activated. **Women are moving their lives forward thanks to your support and belief in the mission of Abby's House.**

With renovations complete at 52 High Street, new rents are below market rate, ranging from \$500 - \$625 a month, depending on income level. Twenty-nine of the rooms have MRVP vouchers (Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program) for women who are extremely low-income, requiring they pay only 30% of their income towards rent. This means that women who are homeless with little or no income can afford a safe, dignified place to live.

"We've seen women move in who were in domestic violence situations, women who could no longer afford where they were living after taking care of sick relatives, and



The women of Abby's House celebrate the 4th of July with a cookout with players and staff from the Massachusetts Pirates

those who were living in downright unsafe situations," said Rose, Housing Specialist at Abby's House. "The housing that's available here is truly life-saving and life-changing for women in our community."

"At Abby's, women have a safe, secure place to live that is supportive of their needs. The women have easy access to transportation, are able to save up money while they work, and have access to advocacy services which help provide individualized support, as well as educational and recreational programming - all while being surrounded by a community that fosters healing and is here to cheer them on, every step of the way."

Through your support, you have helped provide life-changing housing for women who are otherwise at risk of being homeless. You have given them the opportunity to learn and grow in an environment that supports their unique journeys. **Thank you for inspiring each woman at Abby's House to know that she is worthy of respect and dignity, and for giving her a chance to rebuild and transform her own life.**



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 www.abbyshouse.org



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Bright Spot

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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.



Carrying on the Legacy of Our Founders

And Opening the Door for A New Generation of Women

When the women's center first opened its doors in 1986 in the dining room of the shelter, it was answering a need in the community. The founders of Abby's House realized that once a woman moved on from shelter, she lacked the sense of community she once had - she missed the friendships that were formed, the compassion of volunteers and staff, and the ability to create and converse in a safe space. Opening the women's center was the answer to restoring this sense of community and creating a home away from home.



The Annette Rafferty Women's Empowerment Center offers programming that promotes overall well-being, like yoga, for residents and guests to enjoy!

Fast forward 30-plus years and the women's center, now renamed the Annette Rafferty Women's Empowerment Center, is still the very heart and soul of Abby's House. It is where both former and current shelter guests and residents can commune in a space that is safe and judgement free - where they can learn skills that empower them in their daily lives. It's where stability, creativity, healing, and education collide through programming such as financial literacy, resumé building, health and wellness, access to a food pantry and meals, arts and crafts, a walking club and more.

Though the overall programming and needs of the women have evolved since its humble beginnings, the Annette Rafferty Women's Empowerment Center remains an essential part of Abby's House, helping to prevent homelessness from reoccurring by providing for the overall well-being of women, with and without children, who come through our doors. This sentiment can be felt when talking to the residents of Abby's House, like Donna, who said, *"We all need hope and the Annette Rafferty Women's Empowerment Center gives us that. It allows us to create and learn new things while being part of a community that supports one another."* Thank you for helping to make it possible to carry on the legacy of our founders in a newly renovated space that fosters healing and community for the women we serve.

THANK YOU

*For Making Our Annual Fundraising Event,
 Spring-Tacular a True Success!*

Your generosity helped raise \$85,000 to support our mission and programs at this year's event, held on May 16th.

We can't wait to see you all at next year's event on May 14, 2020!



52 High Street Renovations Complete

A message from Executive Director, Stephanie Page

We are excited to announce that as of July 2019, the renovation of our largest property of safe, supportive housing for women is complete! The transformation of this home is truly remarkable, and will be better able to answer the needs of women facing homelessness now and in the decades to come.

Through the completion of this renovation, 55 single units have been restored and already leased to women in need - many of whom are here after leaving shelters, recovery treatment programs, domestic violence situations and more - women who have desperately needed the type of safe, affordable and supportive housing that Abby's House provides. They are all here to take steps forward in their lives and heal from past traumas in an environment that has been created to activate women's empowerment. **They are here because of your support and belief in our mission, and your commitment to seeing that this building remains a safe, supportive place for women in our community.** As we look towards the future of this home and what it truly means to the women we serve, we must also take time to thank all those who made it possible.

Before 52 High Street became part of Abby's House, it was known as St. Joseph's Home for Working Girls, a place specifically for women with no safe place to live. The Sisters of Mercy built 52 High Street and operated St. Joseph's Home for Working Girls as their ministry. When the Sisters of Mercy gave the keys to 52 High Street to Abby's House in 2001, our missions blended - keeping the focus on providing safe, affordable and supportive housing for women who needed it. We are grateful to them to be able to carry on this legacy.

Remaining largely unaltered since its creation in the 1920s, this home needed extensive renovations in order to meet the needs of current and future generations.



New, accessible entrance into 52 High Street

Answering the call to make this \$16.2 million renovation financially possible were individuals, businesses and foundations who contributed to a successful \$2 million capital campaign, as well as the Massachusetts Housing and Investment Corporation (MHIC), the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), CEDAC, the City of Worcester, Mass Development, Dorfman Capital, Mass Housing, and Eastern Bank.

We've also been honored to partner with our housing consultant, the Women's Institute for Housing and Economic Development, and a team of excellent project attorneys, accountants, and environmental and historic building consultants; our general contractor Allegrone Companies and many excellent local subcontractors; and a woman-led architectural team from The Narrow Gate Architecture, Ltd. They have preserved the integrity of the building, its purpose as a safe home and healing space, and its historic nature for years to come.

None of this, however, would have been possible without your continued support and generosity. The women who call 52 High Street "home" are genuinely grateful.

With sincere appreciation,

Stephanie

Come Visit Us!

They say seeing is believing, and the best way to truly see the mission of Abby's House in action is by visiting us. Taking a tour provides a unique opportunity to get a behind-the-scenes look at our largest property of safe, supportive housing for women, meet with our dedicated staff, learn about our advocacy programs, and meet with residents and guests who benefit from your generosity.

Tours are available on Wednesday afternoons from 2 - 4 p.m. Other tour days and times can be arranged. For questions or to schedule your tour, contact Director of Development, Kelly Whalen at kelly@abbyshouse.org | (508) 756-5486 x214.



Get Involved At Abby's House!



Abby's House relies on the collective contributions of time, talent and treasure from our supporters.

Together, we have built a safe, supportive community for women and with your help, Abby's House will continue to play a critical role in helping low-income and homeless women in Worcester, MA reclaim and rebuild their lives. There are many ways that you can support the women and children of 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 recurring gifts to multiply your impact.

Volunteer:

By becoming a volunteer you'll play an essential role in the lives of women who are at risk of being homeless. Abby's House hosts more than 200 volunteers annually who donate more than 19,000 hours of service to our community. Learn more at abbyshouse.org/get-involved/volunteer/

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, visit abbyshouse.org/get-involved/donate-needed-items

Naming Opportunities Available

52 High Street Single Occupancy Bedrooms

Would you like the opportunity to have one of the 55 newly renovated single occupancy bedrooms named in honor or in memory of a loved one? Contact Director of Development, Kelly Whalen at kelly@abbyshouse.org or by phone at 508-756-5486 x214.

Naming opportunities are \$7,500 and above.

Congratulations Parlee Jones!

2019 Greater Worcester Community Foundation Renaissance Award Recipient



Shelter Manager, Parlee Jones (right) receives Renaissance Award from former Greater Worcester Community Foundation Executive Director, Ann Lisi (left).

The Greater Worcester Community Foundation (GWCF) awarded Abby's House Shelter Manager, Parlee Jones, with this year's Renaissance Award. The Renaissance Award is presented annually to an outstanding individual for exemplary leadership in the nonprofit community. Selection for this award is based on qualities of commitment and accomplishment, including a talent in fostering collaborative relationships.

Parlee has been on staff at Abby's House for over 15 years, providing advocacy and support to homeless women by connecting them with resources to ensure their safety and strengthen their options for independence.

"I'm honored and humbled to be the GWCF Renaissance Award recipient this year," said Jones. "It feels good to be acknowledged for the work I've been doing in the community and at Abby's House. From assisting the guests at Abby's on their journey towards housing and stability, to celebrating culture through the Black Heritage Festival and OurStory Edutainment, I feel that it is our duty as humans to leave this world and people in a better space than we find them. We have to remember that we are all just walking each other home."



Abby's House
5K Run/Walk
October 19, 2019

abbyshouse.racewire.com



*Sponsorship opportunities available! Contact Director of Development, Kelly Whalen at kelly@abbyshouse.org | (508) 756-5486 x214