

Summer 2025

Finding Steadiness, Finding Home

Abby's House helps Michelle reclaim hope and stability

My name is Michelle, and I was honored to share a piece of my story at this year's Spring-Tacular. I'm grateful for the chance to share it with you here, too.

I grew up mostly in Alabama, raised by my grandmother and surrounded by family – lots of aunts, uncles, and cousins. There was always someone to laugh with, talk to, or lean on. Eventually, I moved to New York to live with my mom and seven siblings. Our house was always full of music. We'd sing and dance – there was always some entertainment going on in our house.

I had dreams. I wanted stability, especially for my four sons. But life doesn't always go as planned. After my children's father and I split up, I stayed here in Worcester, but I moved around a lot – staying with family, trying my best to figure things out.

Then in 2019, everything shifted. I had an accident at work – something I never saw coming – and it left me with injuries to my leg and foot that still affect me today. I couldn't work anymore, and without a steady income, I couldn't afford a place of my own. At the time, I was staying with my son and daughter-in-law. We made it work – until their landlord said I couldn't stay since my name wasn't on the lease. That was tough to hear. I remember thinking, *"How did I get here?"*

I searched for housing for months. I felt exhausted, frustrated, and honestly – I had lost a lot of hope. That's when my sister-in-law told me about Abby's House.

I remember walking in for the first time with one of my sons. We met with the Property Manager, and my son said, "This is my mom, and she's very special to me. You make sure you take good care of her." I wasn't happy about the situation I was in, but I felt something I hadn't felt in a long time – relief.



Michelle shared her powerful story at the 12th Annual Spring-Tacular Celebration on May 15th.

Photo by Phil Smith

Today, I live in one of the supportive housing units at Abby's House. I'll be honest – I didn't expect to end up here. I wanted something of my own. But Abby's has given me pieces of what I've longed for: a place to rest, people who care, and the chance to breathe again.

With the help of the amazing advocates, I get support with tasks that once felt overwhelming, like handling paperwork and managing important documents. I have access to food, clothes, and personal care items. But most importantly, I have community. I've celebrated holidays, had deep conversations, shared laughter and tears – and I feel like I have a place here.

I still have goals. I still want a home that's fully mine. But for now, I'm thankful to be somewhere steady and safe. Because home isn't just about where you live – it's about knowing someone is there when it counts.

**That's what Abby's House has done for me.
That's what bringing home to everyone means.**



Annette Rafferty
Founder

Julie Orozco
Executive Director

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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.



A Message from Executive Director Julie Orozco

Dear Friends of Abby's House,

As we celebrate 49 years of Abby's House, I am filled with deep pride and gratitude for the strength, resilience, and compassion that have defined this organization since its founding. Over nearly five decades, Abby's House has grown from a bold vision into a vital and trusted resource for women and children experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity.



Julie Orozco
Executive Director

This summer marks one year since the reopening of our shelter following much-needed renovations. With new life breathed into our historic building, we've been able to welcome more women into a space that is safer, more accessible, and truly reflective of the dignity they deserve. Walking through those refreshed hallways, hearing laughter in the kitchen, and seeing women begin to heal and rebuild – it's a daily reminder of what Abby's House is all about.

Looking ahead, we're thrilled to be planning our 50th anniversary celebration in 2026 – a milestone that invites both celebration and renewed commitment. We're reflecting on all the women and children who have walked through our doors and the community that was created because a collective of courageous and compassionate women set out to create a safe place for women and children in our community. From residents and guests who have found a home here at Abby's House, to volunteers and donors who give so generously, you are the heart of this mission.

Thank you for walking alongside us for the past 49 years. Thank you for being part of this story. Whether you've been with us since the inception of Abby's House, or just joined our community, your belief in our work makes all the difference. We will continue to carry this legacy forward, creating even more moments of hope and healing.

With heartfelt gratitude,

12th Annual Spring-Tacular: Bringing Home to Everyone

Presented by Counseling & Assessment Clinic of Worcester, LLC

THANK YOU!

YOU are Bringing Home To Everyone! The 12th Annual Spring-Tacular was an unforgettable evening filled with connection, community, and compassion, and we're still overflowing with gratitude and joy. Thanks to your incredible generosity, we raised over \$166,000 in support of the women and children of Abby's House!

Relive the joy, connection, and community of the 12th Annual Spring-Tacular.
Browse through our event photos: bit.ly/AH12ST

Building Hope, One Playground at a Time

A new space for joy, healing, and play—made possible by volunteers

With the combined hardwork, generosity, and spirit of Working for Worcester, United Way of Central Massachusetts, Consigli, and TJX, a playground has been built at Abby's House, located near our Day Resource Center. This new playground represents not just a safe space for children in the Abby's House community to play and interact, but also a reminder that joy and possibility can grow from community care. On April 5th, volunteers from Working for Worcester (W4W) rolled up their sleeves and dedicated time and energy on their annual build day to support Abby's House. Working for Worcester is a student run organization that was founded by a pair of Holy Cross students in 2012. Over the past 13 years, W4W has reinvested approximately 2 million dollars into the Worcester community, as well as partnering with over 30 local businesses.

Tim Garvin, President and CEO of the United Way of Central Massachusetts shared, "I am thrilled that I got the chance to spend a few hours with Working for Worcester on Build Day. I feel that I left a tiny part of me on that playground – in support of and in gratitude for Abby's House."

It is through the generosity of donors, volunteers, and community partners that Abby's House continues to be a safe, welcoming, and happy place for women and children alike. On Build Day, volunteers were able to assist in painting, assembling furniture, landscaping, and more. Molly Pietrantonio, Abby's House Volunteer and Thrift Shop Manager praised the W4W volunteers, saying, "An enthusiastic crew of 75 collegiate students tackled not just the building of the playscape alongside Consigli Construction, but also a two block radius street clean up. We are so grateful for Working for Worcester!" Build Day was not only a success, but a celebration of the Worcester Community and all of our different strengths.

On July 23rd, Abby's House and project partners gathered for a ribbon cutting to celebrate the new playground's official opening. The impact of this space has already been deeply felt by the women and children at Abby's House. In the words of Associate Director of Shelter Operations, Melanie Amir, "The new playscape has brought a wonderful transformation to life at Abby's House. Children from both the shelter and the on-site apartments now have a safe, inviting space to play, connect, and enjoy the outdoors...The joyful sounds of laughter and activity are a daily reminder of the positive impact this space is having, as both children and their mothers spend more time outside enjoying their community."

Our brand new playscape at 77 Chatham Street remains a hopeful and dignified space in our community that we could not be more proud of. This playscape is currently unnamed which opens up a new naming opportunity at Abby's House. If you are looking to honor a loved one, celebrate the Worcester Community, or to just support the better future that Abby's House is working towards, this new playscape could be the naming opportunity for you, currently priced at \$30,000.

Ready to make your mark? Contact Jennifer Spicer, Director of Development and Communications, at jennifer@abbyshouse.org or 508-756-5486 x239 to learn more about unique naming opportunities.



Abby's House and project partners celebrated the new playscape with a ribbon cutting ceremony.



Presented by:



Register for the 5K!

Virtual: October 11 - October 18, 2025

In-Person: October 18, 2025

West Boylston Middle/High School



Join us for the 16th Annual Abby's House Hybrid 5k Run/Walk.

This is a CERTIFIED, CHIP-TIMED 5K course.

Learn more & register your team today at abbyshouse.org/abbyshouse5k

Get Involved At Abby's House!



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

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. See our list of needed items online at abbyshouse.org/donate-needed-items.

Your Thrift Shop donations also help clothe women and children in need, and raise funds for Abby's House programs. Visit abbyshouse.org/thrift-shop.

Volunteer:

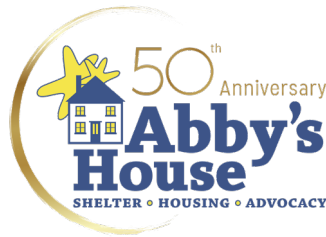
We're looking for dedicated individuals to staff the overnight shelter or help in the Thrift Shop! Training is provided by Abby's House staff. To learn more and to fill out a volunteer application, visit abbyshouse.org/volunteer.

Preserve the Legacy of Abby's House:

Passionate about history? Help shape how Abby's House is remembered! Join our Legacy Preservation Task Force. Email us at abbyshousehistory@gmail.com

50th Anniversary Celebration

Save The Date!



We're thrilled to be celebrating our 50th Anniversary in 2026! To honor five decades of impact, resilience, and community, we hope you'll join us for a special evening of reflection and celebration on **Friday May 29, 2026**.

More details will be shared soon! We can't wait to celebrate with you!

Honor A Loved One With A Lasting Legacy

Room Naming Opportunities Available

Make a meaningful impact by naming a space in our newly renovated shelter in honor or memory of someone special. Your tribute will not only celebrate their legacy but also provide hope and stability for the women and children who turn to Abby's House in their time of need. Leave a lasting mark on our community and show your dedication to ensuring a safe haven for those seeking a fresh start.

Contact Jennifer Spicer, Director of Development and Communications, to discuss the many ways your gift can have incredible meaning and impact, at jennifer@abbyshouse.org or (508)756-5486 x239.

Naming opportunities begin at \$10,000.



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, Larissa Swenson at Larissa@abbyshouse.org or call (508)756-5486 x214 or by visiting abbyshouse.org/donate/#legacy-circle.