

WHAT'S INN-SIDE:

UPDATE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, David S. Weber

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT
Meet Felicia McRoberts, Program Assistant

OUR CLIENTS INSPIRE US!
Celebrate Their Success

CONGRATULATIONS TO ANGIE HAMILTON FOR 21 YEARS

PARTNERSHIP WITH READY READERS

ROOM HAS A BRIGHT NEW LOOK — CHECK IT OUT!

NOTE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR
Message from Shannon Peters

ROOM GOLF TOURNAMENT IS AUGUST 23— SIGN UP NOW!



INN-Sider

SPRING | 2021

Many Thanks for the Incredible Support You Give Us!

Your support makes SO many things possible. . .

Here's just one example. Because you support us so generously we now have several new HVAC units that provide efficient, reliable heating and cooling for our building. And soon we'll be able to replace another aging rooftop unit!

We are still sheltering in place here. We assess the possibility of re-engaging our night sites every quarter. The status at this point is to shelter in place through June of this year and then reassess. Among other key factors, sending clients to our night site partners greatly depends upon when they decide to open their facilities and feel safe hosting our clients. The sooner things get back to "normal" the better it will be for all of us. However, I must point out the many silver linings that continue to be revealed. Our partner congregations have stood by us and found ways to support us despite the non-stop challenges and hardships. They have continued to support us financially, provide volunteers each and every month, and have truly kept us whole — financially and in spirit. We have been amazed and awed — and our clients continue to benefit from your generosity. Our doors have never had to close.

New partnerships have emerged as well — a volunteer made possible a partnership with Panera Bread in Bridgeton. We pick up their overstock items every Wednesday night. Another new partnership is with Community Carryout, a new organization that brought together a large number of area restaurants who commit to serve 250 meals to selected not-for-profits. ROOM was chosen by a wonderful restaurant in Maplewood called Elmwood. They brought dinner each Wednesday night (for 12 weeks) which we served buffet style. ROOM was then chosen by Speedway

Catering, another generous local restaurant, who committed 250 more meals for our clients!

Because we have so much news to share with you, this edition of INN-Sider has been extended to eight pages. Read through and learn about Felicia McRoberts, our new fulltime Program Assistant, who's become a tremendous resource for Angie and Melanie. Read the Success Stories, which show how people's lives are truly changed because we are here to serve them. And, mark your calendars now for this year's annual ROOM Golf Tournament which returns to Old Hickory Golf Club in St. Peters on August 23, 2021.

Thank you again for all you do to help our clients who are homeless. Without you (and I say this all the time) we could not survive. And I hope I will be able to keep on saying it!

Warm regards,

David

David S. Weber
Executive Director



A SPECIAL STAMP "COLLECTION"



Many thanks to Rose Mary Green for her generous donation of postage stamps.

We have certainly put them to good use. Rose Mary, a former ROOM board member and board chair, was very happy to hear that the mixed stamps in her colorful collection help support the work of ROOM. They pay for postage and are beautiful to look at, as well!

Felicia McRoberts is ROOM's new fulltime Program Assistant. Felicia has quickly become a valuable resource for Angie and Melanie, and allows them to focus more closely on their jobs and responsibilities.



Felicia is a mother of 4 children and 4 amazing grandchildren. Her life is centered upon her family, teaching them how to overcome obstacles that life may bring their way and become productive citizens. Predominantly, she has strived to become the best at what she desires to do in life. Being people-centric, she always had a profound way of lending a helping hand to others while also learning to navigate life. The love and compassion she has found is more rewarding to her in itself. Now, she is part of a team who's mission is to not only help the homeless, but to teach them life skills and mechanisms to become more self-sufficient and live independent lives, which gives her great pleasure.

Prior, Felicia was a certified Nursing Assistant for 14 years. She then fell ill which caused her to change career paths. In 2015 she went back to school at St. Louis Community College where she graduated in 2019 with a degree in Human Services of AAS. As part of her school program she was required to do an internship which she did at ROOM. Afterwards, Felicia was hired as **Overnight Innkeeper/ Shelter Monitor** here. She worked in this position for a year and when the **Program Assistant** position became available, she enthusiastically applied for the job and got it.

Felicia believes that we all can make a difference in someone's life; that is a mission we all should be eager to assist in — whether we actually have a degree or not. Sometimes it's the smallest things we do can that make a "BIG" difference to someone who is less fortunate. A kind word or nice compliment can uplift anyone's spirit and just might give them the strength to go on and face another day. Life is all about serving one another and that's something we just can't get enough of — "Good Servants" working together to build a bright future for us all.

Felicia lives her beliefs everyday — and we are so very fortunate to have her as a valued member of our staff!

This is Why We're Here. . .

Mr. Dave,

I remember the day I was in a stranger's car coming here from quarantine. Most of my belongings had been stolen; what wasn't stolen wasn't worth much. I remember feeling so lost and scared and I was crying,

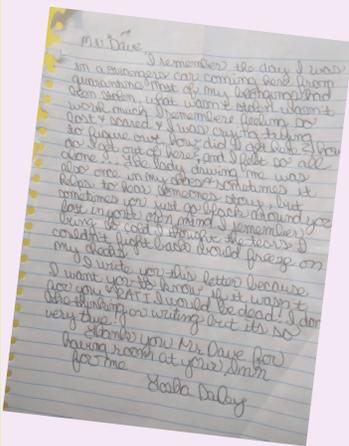
trying to figure out, how did I get here? And I felt so all alone. . .

The lady driving me was also once in my shoes —and sometimes it helps to hear someone's story, but sometimes you just go black around you, lost in your own mind. I

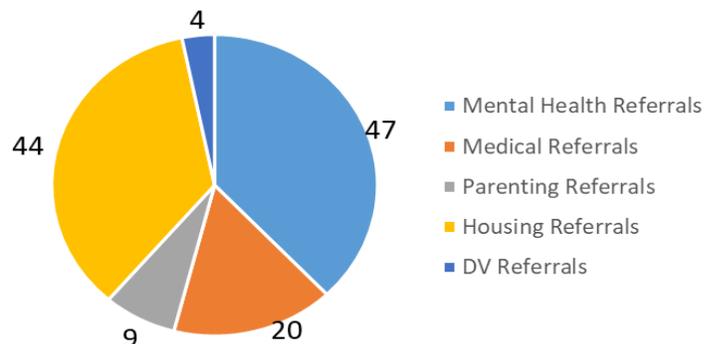
remember being so cold I thought the tears I couldn't fight back would freeze on my cheeks.

I write you this letter because I want you to know if it wasn't for you and ROOM at the Inn I would be dead! I don't like thinking or writing this, but it's so very true...

Thank you Mr. Dave for having room at ROOM at the Inn for me.
— Tosha



Referrals, Appointments & Visits DEC-MAR



Congratulations to Angie for 21 Years of Service!

In March we celebrated Angela Hamilton's **21 years of service** at ROOM. Angie's journey here began in 1999 while she attended the University of Missouri-St. Louis. She started here as a practicum student in the field of social work, and proved herself so valuable that she was hired as an employee. Currently, Angie serves as our Client Coordinator, where she's



responsible for case management of our clients. What she likes most about working at ROOM is "seeing clients get on their feet and into housing." Our clients and staff feel very fortunate to have Angie here. She is an inspiration to us all. Thank you, Angie!

We recently formed a great new partnership that we are very excited about! The mission of Ready Readers is to prepare preschool-age children living in low-income communities to become readers by reading aloud to them, providing high quality books, and offering literacy-related experiences. Along with classroom visits led by volunteers, Ready Readers delivers gift books to each classroom several times per year.



ROOM is so fortunate to have developed a partnership with this outstanding organization. Just take a look at the wonderful literature kits and books they have provided for our preschool-age children (see left).

Volunteers read books on the theme of the week to the kids and implement the prepared activities. Favorite books are repeated to allow the children to become familiar with the books and vocabulary. Cindy Warren, Volunteer Coordinator at ROOM, set up and also oversees our on-site classroom. She made a bulletin board out of the "I Like Me" theme (see right). Cindy has found the Ready Readers books, materials and volunteers outstanding — and believes they can help the kids at ROOM start to develop a love for books and begin to experience the many rewards of literacy.



We always need new readers! If you'd like to volunteer for ROOM's reading program or preschool class please contact Cindy Warren at cwarren@roomstl.org or call 314-209-9181. We'd love to have you — and the kids would, too!

We Really Love our New Look . . . and Hope You Do, Too!

Thanks to the talent and generosity of a prominent local graphic design studio, Stephens Creative, the ROOM brand and logo have been updated and refreshed. We love the clean, modern look and new upbeat color scheme.

Donna Stephens, Creative Director and owner of Stephens Creative, was kind enough to offer her firm's services at a fraction of the cost of a typical rebranding effort. We are so very grateful to Stephens Creative — and for the beautiful look they created for us!

Although the logo has evolved significantly from what it was, the core symbolism was purposefully maintained. Most essential was to reflect ROOM's mission and purpose, and honor the legacy of the Sisters of Divine Providence. As you look at our logo, here are some important points to note:

- The overall shape of the shelter has been modernized yet is still grounded in the "room at the inn" scriptural reference.
- A pathway has been added to designate the journey our clients take from the time they enter our door until they leave us and move forward along the path to permanent housing and stability for themselves and their families.
- In addition to the graphic elements, we made several subtle yet powerful changes to our original tagline. Instead of a single phrase, it is now made up of two declarative statements. We also personalized the wording, changing "clients with a future" to "Families with a future."



Logo options for alternate uses

logo font/tag used alone



logo icon/mark used alone



horizontal



stacked for square spaces



We've had overwhelmingly positive response to our updated look! It visually reminds us that the future can indeed be bright for our clients, and for the organization. Clients, employees, volunteers and board members appreciate the cheerful colors and modernized look. And as small as it may seem, changing that one word in our tagline has had an impact as well. Women and families are our primary focus, and now that stands out front and center in our logo.

It's hard to believe that the first quarter of 2021 has already come to a close. It has almost become cliché to say how "weird" the impact that 2020 and the pandemic have had on the passage of time... on the one hand, it's almost hard to remember life before 2020, and on the other hand, if we blink our eyes, another month has passed! Case in point: I realize as I write this that I began drafting this note more than a month ago! As time has passed, the news we want to share has changed as well! Such a weird time we're in. But perhaps we're beginning to see some light at the end of the tunnel.

As we now enter spring and head toward a beautiful St. Louis summer (remember to always have a positive outlook), we see that the **2021 Room at the Inn Golf Tournament** is also quickly approaching! The last time we spoke, I mentioned how incredible the 2020 tournament was and how grateful we are to our friends who have continued to support us over the years through this tournament. Now, I'm excited to say that we have already opened early registration for this year's tournament and we're already off to the races! We are still looking for sponsors and are always ready to welcome new players; so if you're reading this and thinking "maybe I'll give the golf tournament a try this year" — DO IT! You'll be glad you did (and so will we)!

In addition to preparing for the Golf Tournament (our main fundraising event this year), we are also making some important progress toward our vision for the future of ROOM (or at least a big part of that vision), which is moving to a 24/7 single-site

(cont. on next page)

Client Success Stories



Mr. Dwayne had legal troubles and avoided going to see his probation officer for over a year. Because our agency wrote a letter on his behalf, his charges will be dropped. His probation officer stated that if she had not gotten the letter, she wouldn't have had any positive things to say about him — and now that has changed. Mr. Dwayne participated in weekly counseling sessions, life skills classes, and a job readiness program. He is glad to not have legal matters hanging over his head. He also recently had a job interview — and was hired!



T. Dailey is doing great. She has been getting counseling while at the shelter in addition to inpatient mental health treatment. She was connected to Behavioral Health Response and now has a support team of people working with her from Places for People. She is being assisted with Medicaid and other mainstream resources. Fortunately, T. Dailey appears to be on the right prescriptions and has stabilized. She is calm and appreciates the services we provide.



Ania recently graduated from our Employee Readiness program. Her children Patton and Paisley are transported by staff and volunteers to Head Start each day and can eat their breakfast while there. Patton and Paisley enjoy going to Head Start. Coming back to ROOM each day, they are laughing and talking to their mom about playing with their new friends — and begging to go to McDonald's!



Ms. Kathleen came to the shelter in September 2020. She served as our innkeeper for when emergencies arose and did an excellent job. While here she participated in counseling. She saved her money and applied for an apartment — which she got! We are so happy to report that she just moved into her home which was furnished with the help of Home Sweet Home. Congratulations, Ms. Kathleen!



Tara came into the program with her two children. She had been working two jobs, but recently found a new position that she's really excited about! Her new job is at a factory — she says it's less stressful, and she really likes it. Monday through Friday, she gets her kids to a childcare provider — her school age son stays with a relative during the week to do school virtually. Tara was referred for housing and looks forward to getting her family into a home.

Our Board Members

Aigul Abdyidaeva,

MBA Nonprofit Management

Brandy Bowdry, *Bowdry's Independent Paralegal Services, LLC*

David K. Buenger, CPA TREASURER

Al Fressola, *Psychologist*

David Gerst, *Senior Sales Executive, Fiserv Card Services*

Jim Gissy, *President, Capitol Management Services*

Melvin Goldman, *Account Executive*

Darryl Grimes, *Interim CEO, Better Family Life, Inc.*

Daniel Manning, *Attorney, Doster Ullom & Boyle, LLC*

William Oesterle VICE CHAIR, *Realtor, Re/Max Gold*

Sr. Ann Pairn, CDP, *Sisters of Divine Providence*

Jeff Pattison SECRETARY, *Director of HR, ELANTAS PDG*

Shannon Peters CHAIR, *Attorney, Husch Blackwell, LLP*

Vernon Prinster, *Owner VSP Construction*

Ida Smith, *Former Client*

Julie Wolfe PAST CHAIR, *Chief Financial Officer, St. Charles City-County Library District*

If you know someone in need of services, please have them call:
St. Louis County Homeless Helpline: **(314) 802-5444** or **(866) 802-7155** or simply **211**

model. We have already completed Phase One, a very productive engagement with an architecture firm, to discuss the many updates and reconfigurations to our building which will be necessary to support our vision. In addition, we have had several preliminary discussions with a number of important groups regarding potential implementation of our plan, and we are optimistic that we are making positive progress toward our vision.

In the meantime, for over a year now, we have continued to serve our families in every way we can in order to support them through what, for many of them, is likely the most difficult challenge they have ever faced. And we will continue to do so as long as we have the necessary resources, thanks to our partners and friends like you.

We are also in the process of refreshing and updating ROOM's "brand" and as part of that process we have an exciting new logo design and color pallet! We are also in the process of a complete renovation of our website and "e-space" as well! It is all very exciting -- and it all points toward the wonderful future that we fully anticipate coming to fruition in the not-so-distant future.

As always, we continue to look to the future while remaining incredibly thankful for our past and the support of all of our extended family... which includes YOU! Please let us know if you have an interest in supporting our families in any way, large or small, financial or hands-on, and we will help get you plugged in! And, if you know of any businesses, large or small that would be interested in sponsoring the golf tournament this year, please have them reach out to David! We're so blessed to have you on our team! And, as always... onward and upward!

Thanks, and God Bless. *Shannon D. Peters*

A Chat with The Birthday Lady!

Recently, Volunteer Coordinator Cindy Warren had a chance to interview Rolanda Finch, Founder of **It's Your Birthday, Inc.**, a long-time ROOM partner. Their mission is to create a fun and memorable birthday experience for children who reside in homeless and domestic violence shelters.

How did you start IYBI?

While volunteering at a homeless shelter, I asked the executive director, "How do children celebrate their birthday?" He explained, because of a lack of resources and funding, nothing is done. I love birthdays and celebrate mine during the entire month of September! I felt these children deserved the same enjoyment I remembered as a child. In 2014, It's Your Birthday, Inc. was born!



How long have you been giving smiles to children at The Room at the Inn?

I think it was 2016 when we gave our first party here. I remember being so excited knowing how happy we were as we knew the kids were in for a good time.

What happens at the party?

We usually will have a balloon artist or magician to entertain the children, or we play fun games like minute-to-win-it games. The kids have a yummy cake or cupcakes, ice cream, juice, chips, and candy. All the children at the party can select a toy of their choice. Younger birthday children receive a Birthday Bear from Build-a-Bear. Older children receive a gift card from a retailer or fast-food restaurant. All birthday children receive a birthday card and we sing 'Happy Birthday' to each child individually. It's important that we make them feel special on their day!



Is the party only for children?

We found that moms like to attend and have fun, too, so the birthday parties have become a family event — a chance for mom and child to have fun during such a difficult time. We bring enough treats for mom and she can also select a variety of hygiene products.

Do you offer other celebrations for the children?

Yes! We also offer: **Birthday-in-a-Box** - decorations along with a gift card for a cake, ice cream, and juice; **Birthday-in-a-Class** - we provide cupcakes for the child to share with his/her classmates; the child is told the cupcakes are from their parent. This allows the parent to receive the credit for the great birthday memory. **Birthday Surprise** offers moms the opportunity to purchase a gift for their child from our Amazon Wish List, which is sent directly to the shelter. Giving the mom the opportunity to be the "hero" is important to us. We also have a **Happy Born Box** to celebrate moms who give birth while living in the shelter. The box includes items to welcome the newborn into the world — after all, It's Their Birthday!

You recently mentioned a tutoring service, how does it work?

With Covid-19, we realized some children in shelters may not receive tutoring services needed. So, we partnered with Maryville University students to offer free virtual tutoring services to elementary aged children.

THANK YOU to Rolanda and It's Your Birthday, Inc. for all the joy you bring to children and their families!

Employment Readiness Training

Our clients made real progress towards achieving their goals by engaging in an online Employment Readiness Program sponsored by Connections to Success. This 3-week training program was held each weekday morning from 9am-12:30 pm. Topics such as conducting a job search, breaking the employment barrier, and writing resumes were covered in this comprehensive training. We are very pleased to say that six clients successfully completed the program!

Professional Mental Health Counseling

We are thankful for grants provided by Bridgeton Landfill that provide for on-site professional mental health counseling for our clients. In-person appointments are available weekly on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and virtual sessions are also available.

Friday Workout in Education

- Recently, a nurse, speech pathologist, and licensed teacher visited ROOM to tutor and assist three of our children. The children received instruction to help finish assignments, and reinforce the skills they are learning.
- A special thanks to volunteers, Kristin, Heba, and Ginger for tutoring our children on Fridays!
- Check out our Facebook page for pictures of our tutoring efforts! If you are interested in helping tutor a child, please contact Cindy Warren at cwarren@roomstl.org



Volunteers Needed

DRIVERS FOR HEAD START TRANSPORTATION — A.M.

- Looking for a great opportunity to serve? Are you available **Mon, Thurs and Fri** mornings to help transport our children and parents to Head Start? Driver will pick up parents and children and transport them to Head Start in our ROOM van. A valid driver's license is required. Time commitment: **8:15am-9:15 am**.

DRIVERS FOR HEAD START TRANSPORTATION — P.M.

- Driver will pick up parents in the afternoon at the shelter and transport them to Head Start to pick up their children, then bring parents and children back to the shelter. Time commitment: **12:30pm-1:30pm**.

READY READING BUDDIES FOR OUR PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

- Seeking volunteers to read to our preschool aged children in the afternoons from **3pm-4pm on Tues-Fri**. Thank you to Bryce, Jessica, and Peyton for reading on Mondays!

AFTERNOON CHILDCARE/PRESCHOOL

- Need volunteers to read and play games with our preschool children, **Mon-Thurs from 1:30pm-3:00pm**. Thank you to Penny and Sylvia for serving on Friday afternoons!



Updating the ROOM Data Base

Our staff and volunteers are working daily to update information in our data base. If you receive a phone call from ROOM, please consider helping us complete your information. We are hoping to have a current address, phone number, and email for all our constituents. A special "thank you!" to Lisa for putting in many volunteer hours to help update our database.



Greeting Card Fundraiser

Our all-occasion greeting card fundraiser continues — and so far, it's been a great success! There are seven unique cards in each set — all designed by Amber, a 13 year old budding artist and ROOM client. Just call 314-209-9181 to order yours. And buy a set for a friend — these make wonderful gifts!

Item Donations

Due to Covid 19 restrictions, we are still accepting **only new items** at ROOM. As always, we greatly appreciate your generosity and willingness to help our clients! Also, we ask that you please call ahead if you want to donate food. Call David at 314 209-9181.

Are you interested in volunteering or need more information? Please contact Cindy Warren, Volunteer Coordinator, at 314-209-9181, cwarren@roomstl.org, or go to <http://www.roomstl.org>

We  our **AMAZING Volunteers!**

It's almost Spring Appeal time at ROOM!

We'll be reaching out to you again this year with a humble request for your support. ROOM relies heavily on your ongoing generosity and kindness to keep us going — day-after-day, month-after-month, year-after-year — so that we may serve the homeless families and children who need us. Our **Spring Appeal** enables us to help cover ongoing operational expenses and keep our doors open. Any gift is welcomed — and very greatly appreciated.



A Look at Life at ROOM!



Room at the Inn

Shelter with a purpose. Families with a future.
314.209.9181 | www.roomstl.org

Thank you for your support! Here are other ways you can help our shelter:

WISH LIST

- Paper Towels
- Paper Plates
- Plastic Cutlery
- Paper Cups
- Rolls of Bath Tissue
- Fresh Vegetables
- Fresh Meat
- Cleaning Solvents
- Liquid Dish detergent
- Clear Plastic Totes (Medium & Large)
- Trash Bags (13, 44& 55)

Umbrellas

- Men's White and Colored T-Shirts (Med-3x)
- Men's Sweat Pants (Med, Lg, XL, XXL)
- Men's Pajama Bottoms (Med, Lg, XL, XXL)
- Women's Sweat Pants (Med, Lg, XL, XXL)
- Women's Pajama Bottoms (Med, Lg, XL, XXL)
- Women's Colored T-Shirts (Med, Lg, XL, XXL)

Vaseline

- Mesh Laundry Bags
- Storage Baggies (Qt, G, 2G)
- Storage Containers (regular and microwave)
- Foil and Plastic Wrap
- Aldi, Walmart, and Visa gift cards
- Bus Passes
- Thumb Drives
- Copy Paper
- Computers

314.209.9181 | www.roomstl.org

STAFF MEMBERS

8

- David S. Weber, Executive Director
- Angela Hamilton, Client Coordinator
- Cindy Warren, Volunteer Coordinator
- Melanie Matthew, Program Coordinator
- Monica Barnett, Administrative Coordinator
- Steve Jones, Operations Coordinator
- Felicia McRoberts, Program Assistant

SHELTER MONITORS

- Eula Johnson
- Shalia Rice
- Ida Hall
- Kathy Martin
- Connie Washington
- Jeanell Becton

CONTACT INFORMATION

- 314 209-9181
- dweber@roomstl.org
- www.roomstl.org

Congratulations to the Graduates!



CONNECTIONS
TO SUCCESS

Please join us in offering a hearty congratulations to our recent graduates! Six clients recently completed a comprehensive 3-week employee readiness program facilitated by ROOM's partner, Connections to Success.

Clients were given important tools to improve their ability to seek out and gain employment. Our graduates are: **Dwayne, Ania, Tasha and Cassie** (back row), **Ramona and Sharina** (front row).

We are very happy to say some of these clients have already started new jobs. Thanks for your efforts — together we are accomplishing great things!



August 23, 2021

8th Annual GOLF TOURNAMENT to Support Programs at Room at the Inn

Join us this year for our annual tournament at Old Hickory Golf Club, Saint Peters MO. It's a day of golf, food, prizes, auction, raffle — and FUN!



Last year was fantastic, and we're going to make this year even better. Sign up soon — while spots are still open!

Call David Weber at 314 209-9181 or visit www.roomstl.org/events to register.
Sponsorships are Available!

MISSION STATEMENT OF ROOM AT THE INN

Furthering the mission and the legacy of the Sisters of Divine Providence, Room at the Inn provides emergency shelter and a stabilizing support system to women and families in need in St. Louis County, using a collaborative, interfaith effort of congregations and organizations throughout the St. Louis Region.

Room at the Inn is a temporary emergency shelter for homeless women and families. We empower our program participants to create solutions to their homelessness through education, referrals and case management. ROOM serves approximately 150-250 clients per year, including single mothers with children, single women, two-parent and single-father families. Our program capacity is 20 clients per day, and we assist homeless throughout the St. Louis region. Founded by the Sisters of Divine Providence, Room at the Inn is a 501(c)(3) non-profit agency, incorporated in Missouri. We are supported by a robust network of approximately 2,000 volunteers and more than 50 interfaith congregations who serve as night site partners. Our night site partners come from 15 faith traditions and a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds. We also collaborate with outside agencies to make needed services available for our clients, serving as a catalyst for the St. Louis community to help people create solutions to their homelessness.



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Bridgeton, MO 63044