

# COMMONPLACE

JUNE 2010

## The F-M Dorothy Day House of Hospitality, Inc.

“ A Christian community providing services to the homeless and hungry.”

### FMDDH Staff Members:

**Sonja Ellner**  
*Director (On Leave)*  
**Gene Thompson**  
*Interim Director*  
**Mark Altenburg**  
*Assistant Director*  
**Jesse White**  
*Interim Food Pantry Coordinator*

### Service Coordinators

Cheryl Jesse Sarah Anthony  
Scott Gerry Carson

### FMDDH Board Members:

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**Cherie Clark**  
**Sr. Shawna Foley**  
**Brian Arett**

### Contact Information:

**House:** 714 South 8th Street  
Moorhead, MN 56560  
218-233-5763 (phone)  
218-227-0327 (fax)  
fmddh@702com.net

**Pantry:** 1308 Main Avenue  
Moorhead, MN 56560  
218-284-8895  
Open 6:30-8 p.m. M-Th



## The North Dakota Coalition for Homeless People (NDCHP) Point-In-Time Survey of Homeless People in the Red River Valley

The North Dakota Coalition for Homeless People (NDCHP) conducted a statewide point-in-time survey of homeless people on **January 27, 2010**. The survey collected information on 347 homeless people in the Region Five area, which includes the Fargo-Moorhead Metro Area.

Some highlights of this study concluded:

- ▶ **When Asked the Reason for Their Homelessness:**  
40% indicated “unemployment” (up from 24% in 2006)  
43% indicated “unable to pay rent” (up from 27% in 2006)  
35% indicated “Substance Abuse” (down from 39% in 2006)  
23% indicated “bad credit” (up from 8% in 2006)  
14% indicated “mental illness” (up from 12% in 2006)  
13% indicated “medical problems” (up from 10% 2006)  
12% indicated “underemployment” (up from 6% in 2006)  
11% indicated “domestic violence” (same as 2006)
- ▶ **When Asked About Sources of Income:**  
33% said “Employment” (down from 48% in 2006)
- ▶ **When Asked About Educational Attainment:**  
12% had “Completed College” (up from 5% in 2006)
- ▶ **When Asked About Veteran Status:**  
27% were Veterans (up from 18% in 2006)  
5% received Veteran’s benefits (Down from 9% in 2006)
- ▶ **When Asked Their Race:**  
62% of those surveyed identified as “White”  
15% as “American Indian” (down from 22% in 2006)  
16% as “Black” (up from 8% in 2006)

Source: <http://www.ndhomelesscoalition.org/facts/pit.html>

## Volunteers Needed!

We are in need of volunteers at the Food Pantry throughout the summer.

We are open Monday-Thursday from 10 am to 8 p.m. on most days. Individuals and groups are always welcome. We also can use groups of volunteers to stock, clean, and sort during the day and to help clients with distribution. This is a great way to see your friends, family, and/or coworkers and give back at the same time.

If you want to know more about the volunteer opportunities at the Food Pantry, please contact me via phone (218) 284-8895, email [fmddh.foodpantry@gmail.com](mailto:fmddh.foodpantry@gmail.com), Facebook, or stop by.

## Current Needs List

### For Guests/Visitors

-Toiletry items (conditioner, toothbrushes, toothpaste, deodorant, etc.), Socks, white Tshirts and underwear

### Shelter

-Coffee and Creamer, Milk  
-Household cleaning gloves (size L and XL)  
-Bathroom towels, shower curtains, bath rugs  
-Laundry soap (powder or liquid)  
-Square tupperware containers (all sizes needed)  
-Gift Cards (Hornbacher's, Office Max, etc.)

### Food Pantry

-Food, especially that of nutritious value, including: fruits, cereal, crackers, meat (commercially processed), peanut butter, rice, potatoes, milk, crackers and pasta diners, Baby food and diapers

## Board Members Sought

We are currently looking for interested community members who would like to serve on our board. We meet the 2nd Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm. Our meetings usually last about an hour and a half.

If you have any questions please feel free to call Gene at (218) 233-5763 or e-mail [fmddh@702com.net](mailto:fmddh@702com.net). If you are interested and would like to visit us at a meeting you are more than welcome.

## "In Honor and In Memory" March 2010 through May 2010

In Honor of the Priests & Staff of St. Joseph's Church in Mhd  
by Gary & Sharon Grugel  
In Honor of Polly Fassinger & Richard Rathge  
by Linda Herman  
In Honor of Polly Fassinger & Richard Rathge  
by Robert & Karen Rathge  
In Honor of James & Julie Aageson  
by Gregg & Barbara Morlock  
In Honor of Kevin & Robin Johnson Family  
by Gregg & Barbara Morlock  
In Honor of Stacey Asenga  
by Harold & Emy Schultz  
In Memory of Karen's Father  
by Richard & Karen Grant  
In Memory of Lloyd Erickson  
by George & Barbara Weatheston  
In Memory of Berger Horsager  
by Anna Helms  
In Memory of Velma Morse  
by James & Judy Ellingson  
In Memory of Paul Hanson  
by Marie Dooley  
In Memory of Ralph Hersch  
by Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Schellack  
Jake Wopata Memorial  
by E.F. Wopata  
In Memory of Kathryn Conlin  
by Karen Wieland  
In Memory of Kathryn Conlin  
by Kevin & Kathleen Riley  
In Memory of Kathryn Conlin  
by Monica Claire Kuklenski  
In Memory of Kathryn Conlin  
by Sylvia Morgan  
In Memory of Kathryn Conlin  
by Richard & Lynn Hentges  
In Memory of Kathryn Conlin  
by George & Barbara Weatheston  
In Memory of Kevin Kelly  
by Ralph & Ann Schellack

## How to Donate On-Line

- 1) Go to [www.impactgiveback.org](http://www.impactgiveback.org)
- 2) Click on "Donate"
- 3) Type "Dorothy Day" in the spot for "Search by Keywords" and hit enter.
- 4) Choose "FM Dorothy Day House of Hospitality"
- 5) Click "Donate"
- 6) Follow the directions on that page to donate.

This is a **safe and secure way** to donate on-line.

*Thank you.*

## Gene: *“He Stood Alone”*

He stood alone, crying as an abandoned baby cries, while the mourners and the curious milled around him. He didn't see them, didn't see me, saw nothing. He cried and that's all. Maybe Judas could have understood how alone he was, or someone who had lost a love that can't ever be explained or replaced. He cried in huge sobbing spasms, tears streaming down his face, contorted in an agony that all of us must one day face alone. Everything has its opposite and the opposite of a love that no one approved of was this, a shattered man alone at a funeral that came years too soon.

When I put my arm around him, it startled him but did nothing to ease his aloneness. When he saw who it was trying to comfort him, his sobbing exploded into gasps of pain and when he hugged me, I knew he wanted never to let go. He said nothing to me, just hugged and cried in haunting, hurting confusion, agony in human form. There was no way for him to understand her death and there was no one willing to help him try, and he cried.

The service was about to begin and he hesitated, his eyes pleading to God, to me, to anyone, that this be not real. I moved forward and he held back, crying to his big brother, unable to face the horror of being forever apart from her. We should, I said.

We sat in the last pew, together and alone, as his sobbing subsided and the trembling stopped. We didn't hear the words, didn't hear the music, didn't look at the casket. Those things weren't part of his grief, or of mine. We sat in the vastness of calamity, my brother and I, each trying to hold on to something that no longer was. The joy they had shared like a tiny kitten was gone, replaced by the sorrow that so often lives within joy.

Great sorrow comes only from great joy and my brother knows this, but not on that day. There was only darkness for him on that day and the next and for many to come, around him and inside him. When the sun is gone, when the warmth is gone, the cold and dark seem eternal but there is no place to hide in that dark and no comfort can exist in that cold. There is no solace on that first day or on the tenth or sixtieth, and he cried.

The final amen was intoned and the pallbearers began their work, and we left. Burial is the last goodbye, the time of unity and consoling, but he was alone and scorned and misunderstood, so his goodbyes would be private. There would be another time to stand over her grave and whisper pained love to his memories, but not that day.

We drove instead to his apartment – their apartment – and the crying erupted again, as we both knew it would, should. She was everywhere and real, only now she was forever in his heart and could never again be in his arms, and he cried. He showed me things, touched things, smiled through tears at memories he couldn't voice. There were friends who would help him through this, he said, both of us praying he was right. We talked about many things that day, moving from this memory to the next, both of us knowing that what he was hoping could never be.

She was gone and he cried. We spent the next few hours chattering and pretending that what we were saying was important, though we both knew it wasn't. We avoided the only thing on our minds, the only thing that really mattered that day, which, I guess, was the right thing to do. When it was time for me to leave, time to go back to my life here, we hugged and I knew he wanted never to let go. As I drove back, I thought strongly about him, hoping and praying that he would recover, and I felt he would. I also prayed that some day in the future, when circumstances were softer, that I could again love him as I did on that day, when everything seemed lost, and he cried.

## Jesse: *“If the Shoe Fits”*

On May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2010 I got a new pair of shoes. Not a literal pair, but the shoes of the food pantry coordinator. These shoes have been worn before and the people that wore them did amazing things for the community.

Starting at the House over two and a half years ago, I never thought I would be doing anything more than volunteering or filling in at the food pantry. But, that is no longer the case and now I have these shoes to fill. They clean, check messages, recruit volunteers, stock, help clients, make appointments, go to meetings, get dirty on a daily basis and stock some more. They are responsible for the operations of the food pantry and at times this can be stressful, but rewarding all the same.

So far, the shoes are fitting great and I hope that the volunteers and clients feel the same. I received my first Thank You card from a client on my seventh day on the job, and though it wasn't a huge singing card with fireworks and a DQ blizzard inside, it felt that way.

The hours are long, the work gets tough, but at the end of the day, it is all worth it. I have helped feed hundreds of families, with the help of hundreds of volunteers, in my short time there already and it is a great feeling.

## **Cheryl: “More Than a Job”**

The semester has just come to end once again. As I think back to my last four years and how much things have changed I can't help but let a smile come across my face. I am surrounded by people I care about, I have a job I care deeply for and school is going as well as to be expected.

This job I have means more to me than just a steady income of money. I don't have to know the horrible past these men have went through or the numerous problems they are currently going through. All I care about is what they plan to do with this chance they have. At five o'clock when they return to the house it's hectic but they are so excited to tell me what they have done all day, the job offers they got, the apartments they went to go see or the other various appointments they had with someone. Every person just wants to be heard and wants to know that someone cares.

I think back to last night at work when the guys returned and everyone wanted to tell me something about their day and I wanted to hear every story. I was in the process of warming up the soup for dinner, setting the table, talking on the phone to a man that needed a food basket and taking in a bag full of donations while listening to each guy's day. I was so excited to hear the excitement in one guy's voice while he talked about his job he just got and his daughter coming to live with him. Another guy was excited about passing his driver's test. Someone else was excited about a potential job after having a phone interview. Other various conversations continued through the night of other things in the guy's life. Nights like this night make my job one of the best things in my life.

## **Dorothy Day Facebook Page**

The *Dorothy Day Food Pantry Volunteer Network* is the group to join if you want to be informed about the happenings of the food pantry. Join the group today and remember to invite your friends too.

Also, if you like what we do you can “like” the FM Dorothy Day House of Hospitality, Inc page like the 211 other people that already have. See photos of the house and pantry, start a discussion, or just stop by and leave a comment!

## **Anthony: “3 Months”**

I have been working at the House for 3 months now, it is great to see the many things the House offers to the community. It is very inspiring to see guests accomplish their goals of finding employment, or housing and break out of homelessness. The food pantry is another great contributor to continuing our mission, simply helping people in need. We have a great team here at the house and pantry, trying to make a difference every day.

## **Scott: “Growing Up”**

My name is Scott and I have been with the Dorothy Day staff as a Live-In Service Coordinator since the middle of March, 2010. I have always enjoyed service work and appreciate being around all the people involved with “common” and “oh, so different goals”.

It is a “treat” to learn something new every day--file it away somewhere in our memory -- waiting to be used again someday to help ourselves or to share with someone else.

A wise gentleman told me one time that we never stop growing up. I believed him, so on that day I learned something..... and I like that.

## **Carson: “Do Good Work”**

My name is Carson Starkey. I'm a senior at Minnesota State University Moorhead. I'm originally from Bemidji, Minnesota. I've lived in Moorhead for five years. I've been a member of the Dorothy Day staff for approximately four months. I have enjoyed the experience immensely and learned a great deal about the administration of social services in the Fargo-Moorhead area. I fully believe that the work performed and the mission here at the Dorothy Day House is noble as well as spiritually fulfilling. I have no doubt that my ongoing work here at the house will continue to be rewarding well into the future. Be well. Do good work. Keep in touch.

## **Sarah: “Still Learning”**

My name is Sarah, and I am a sophomore at MSUM. I have been part of the Dorothy Day staff for almost 2 months. I have gained a great deal of information already about all the different types of resources available to help the homeless, but I am still learning. The house has shown me how to help those in need and has given me the tools to make a difference on someone's life. I am excited to see what all I can accomplish while working here.

## Gerry: "Frank"

Frank was a lot like Jesus.

That's the message a handful of onlookers, composed of Dorothy Day House of Hospitality staff and guests and a representative from the Veteran's Administration, heard from the funeral director as Frank's body was buried under a cloudless April sky in Moorhead's Riverside Cemetery.

"Like Jesus, he never had a home, that we know of. He was a wanderer," he said. Frank, a veteran, passed away at the Dorothy Day House on April 6. He left a few simple belongings and a few fond memories with staff and fellow house guests.

He was among the nation's estimated 1.6 million homeless people. That number is based on a 2009 report from the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The 2010 numbers will be determined through the U.S. Census, and, locally, from an update of the Wilder study, which in 2007 identified 587 homeless persons in Fargo-Moorhead. The North Dakota Coalition for Homeless People earlier this year said there were 779 homeless individuals in the state.

The March 1 edition of *America*, a newsmagazine published by the Jesuits, reports that Midwestern cities and suburbs experienced the largest poverty rate growth between the years 2000 and 2008. Those numbers were compiled by the Brookings Institution. Catholic Charities USA Snapshot Survey, released earlier this year, revealed a dramatic increase in requests for life-sustaining emergency services.

"The survey shows new and underserved populations continuing to request help," Catholic Charities said in its report summary. "In sobering numbers, brutal temperatures couple with rising utility rates and loss of income have left individuals and families hungry, homeless, and cold – many for the first time."

Frank spent his last night in a warm bed. Frank died at home.

## Transitional Housing Needs

Since early spring we have been working with a wonderful group of volunteers to gather together the basic supplies our guys need as they transition into permanent housing. Every dollar saved at this critical time will help our folks stay housed and working.

With wonderful support from the Church of the Good Shepherd we have set up a small warehouse of goods in the back of the Food Pantry.

If you would like to help us with this program, we are in need of the following goods:

- ▶ **Used Furniture** (couches, tv's, recliners, tables)
- ▶ **Pots, Pans, Silverware, Mixing Bowls, Cutting Boards, Kitchen Utensils** (measuring cups, kitchen knives, can openers, spatulas, etc.)
- ▶ **Kitchen Towels, Dish Rags, Dishwashing Supplies** (scrubbers, steel wool, drying racks)
- ▶ **Bath Towels, Shower Curtains, Curtain Rings**
- ▶ **Toilet Brushes, Waste Baskets, Air Freshener**
- ▶ **Coffee Makers, Telephones**
- ▶ **Casserole Pans, Cookie Sheets, Tupperware**
- ▶ **Pillow Cases, Blankets, Pillows**
- ▶ **Office Supplies** (envelopes, notepads, stamps, pens/pencils, scissors, planners, paper clips)
- ▶ **Band Aids, Sewing kits** (needles and thread), **Nail Clippers, Tweezers**
- ▶ **Hardware** (hammers, screwdrivers, pliers)
- ▶ **Laundry Baskets**

These items do not need to be new. Many can be found at rummage sales and at our local dollar stores. Please bring goods to the House (714 8th Street, Moorhead).

*If you need help moving furniture, call Scott at 233-5763*

## Dorothy Day West

Our partnership with Holy Cross Church is thriving. The Pantry is open Monday and Thursdays from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. and serves Daily Bread items. Families can access this pantry as many times during the month as needed. Dorothy Day West is located at 2111 East Main Ave, #16 at Five Star Storage in West Fargo, ND.

This newsletter has been made possible due to the generous support of the businesses shown here. Please support the businesses that support their community!

**LANEY'S**  
Plumbing - Heating - Cooling - Electrical

**"We are Proud to Support the Mission of the Dorothy Day House!"**

**701-237-0543**

**Never an Overtime Charge!**

We would like to thank RJS Building Systems, Inc., especially Rick and Doug for the wonderful job on finishing the Food Pantry Remodeling Project

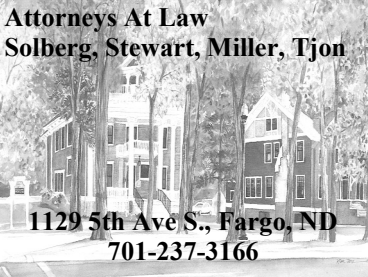
**ANDA PROPERTIES**

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This newsletter is also brought to you by the generous support of Scheels Sporting Goods, Fargo.

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