



"There are no coincidences."

Patrick, my cousin Patty's fourth child, always used to tell her, "There are no coincidences." He

ardently believed that God has a master plan for everyone and everything. As I look back on how we secured the site for our shelter, I concur wholeheartedly.

In 2001 I returned to Fort Wayne to join Allen County Education Partnership/Project READS. My job required serving on the committee for the Rally to Read, where I met two luminous rays of light, Judy Lindsay and Betsy Kachmar. When I moved on to Better Business Bureau in 2015, I left the Rally behind, as other duties and worthy causes consumed my time.

In 2018 I represented BBB at the Senior Information Fair. There I received a warm hug from the always delightful Judy—and an invitation to return to the Rally committee, which was echoed by Betsy. I was thrilled!

At the 2019 Rally, I shared more details of our work with Betsy, who was adding new causes to her open datebook. In November, Betsy hosted a beautiful Tea & Talk so Board Chair Dr. Monique Levesque-Hartle and I could share the mission of our shelter. Betsy's guests were a reflection of her, and we enjoyed ourselves immensely. So when Betsy invited me to a craft party at Well Grounded Café on February 8, I eagerly anticipated meeting more fantastic guests.

And did I ever! Several will appear in future newsletters, but Sherry Myers, the café's owner, literally changed the course of our shelter. Familiar with our vision, she announced she had the perfect building for St. Joseph Missions—and it would be available in three to four years. I informed her that we had to open doors as soon as possible. I have since learned that when Sherry responds, "I will see what I can do," magic happens.

Just two days later, I took a tour. Then three days later, Dr. Monique Levesque-Hartle, Board President, requested a group visit. And five days after that, board members who toured the building were so enthralled, they asked to speak to the owners immediately. A plan was hatched for a gradual takeover of the building—and then it was dramatically altered, due to one more miracle.

On St. Patrick's Day, after receiving notification of a loan for the full purchase less than 24 hours earlier from brand-new community partners John and Judy Brehob, a verbal compact was reached for the entire building. The owners—who had not planned to sell for three or four more years—graciously offered to vacate by the end of this July. On March 19, the Feast of St. Joseph, our patron, the board was informed that the purchase agreement was being drafted for *our shelter*.

Divine providence—via dear friends—had indeed led us to our dream location.

Sadly, our Patrick is no longer with us. Familiar with an endearingly impish side of his personality, I have no doubt he is smiling down upon us, saying simply, "I told you so."

Our deepest thanks,

Lisa Fabian
Executive Director

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Wish list

For those who are fortunate enough to have a home, you understand the needs that come with furnishing it. Our new home could use your help in making it one. We have a variety of practical needs to help our guests feel at home, including everything furniture and kitchen supplies to pillows and blankets. If you'd like to donate new or gently used items, you can find the list here: <https://www.stjosephmissions.org/wish-list.html>

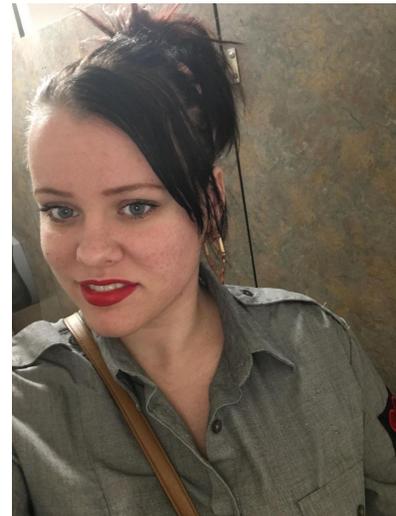
Thank you for your generosity!

Melissa's path to hope

Melissa Doenges, a board member, bravely shares her story of survival, overcoming years of homelessness and abuse to find a path to hope.

"I went through unbearable things as a child. My father wasn't really a father and my mother weren't really a mother. I never really understood family and I was homeless from a young age, beginning at age 5. I was removed from my parents due to severe abuse. I grew up in the system after turning seven. And at 19 I was left homeless with a brown paper bag at McDonald's wondering what I was going to do with my life.

Only with God's mercy, grace, and unconditional love did I make it. I am now 26 years old and a successful woman with a full-time job, my own home, and a Mom to two beautiful cats.



I believe with great love our highest potential can be reached, and anything is possible. But in the absence of love, great catastrophe is amongst us. So as a woman who has been through so much, I stand tall today and I aspire to support the women who are going through the things that I've experienced in my life. I'm here to say that I support St. Joseph's Missions Women's Shelter.

I believe that no woman should ever have to feel like the only option that she has is to give her body just to have a place to lay her head and rest for a night and a warm meal to eat. I know what that feels like too. Woman with children and addictions and abusive partners have a place to go. So as a single woman who has experienced tragic homelessness with nowhere to turn until I was brutally beaten by a man after money, I support the work of St. Joseph Missions. And I encourage you to share your love with the women in our community who need us now."

We're grateful to Melissa for her courage and candor in telling her story at various events and the many insights she has shared with our board in better understanding the struggles single homeless women face.

Upcoming event: Road Rally BINGO

We are so excited to announce a fundraiser to support local businesses while creating a fun and safe event for family and friends!



Road Rally BINGO will be played on Saturday, October 24, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Local businesses have donated funds to support our shelter, and those businesses will be highlighted on our BINGO cards. Participants will visit the specific businesses matching clues on their card, take a selfie, and join us at our finish line. Cards with a Double BINGO cards will be entered in drawings for various prize packages.

Photos will be posted on Facebook and Instagram to continue to promote awareness about our mission and all of those businesses who are supporting us. This is not a timed event, so participants have plenty of time to enjoy a treat or shop along the way.

How can you help? We hope you'll join us for this event. If you can't, you still can help by telling others about it. Full details and BINGO cards can be found here: [Road Rally Bingo](#)

Thank you!

As we near the start of renovations on the emergency shelter, we want to acknowledge the following businesses, organizations, and individuals for their generosity in making this a reality through their monetary gifts and in-kind donations.

- A Catholic Foundation
- Anonymous Donor
- CME Corporation
- Charles W. Kuhne Foundation
- Dr. Monique Levesque-Hartle
- Environmental Management Specialists, Inc.
- Fort Wayne SOUP
- Henry Electric Inc.
- International Paper
- Matson Consulting Engineers, Inc.
- R & C Fence
- Roto-Rooter
- Shambaugh & Son, L.P.
- Sherwin Williams
- Votaw Electric

We invite you to join this illustrious list. And we extend our heartfelt appreciation to our individual donors, who will be included in our fall newsletter! If you'd like to support our work in the community, please donate <https://www.stjosephmissions.org/donate.html>



Welcoming new leadership

We are grateful to welcome the leadership talents of four individuals to our Board of Directors.

Geanie Edgington comes to us from BF Goodrich and has a wealth of knowledge and experience in event planning, public relations, and fundraising. Geanie is passionate about helping to lift up women who, for whatever reason, have fallen and need a little assistance getting back up.

Aaron Robles is founder of Founders Spark, an organization dedicated to supporting the development of entrepreneurs. Dynamic, creative, and an optimist at heart, Aaron loves to offer his gifts of marketing and branding expertise, graphic design, and photography to causes and organizations that are mission-driven to create impact on the community.

Cynthia Hayes has overcome significant hurdles, including a neurological condition at birth, bipolar disorder, depression, abuse, and homelessness. Now married with a full-time health care job, Cynthia has championed the vision of St. Joseph Missions at outreach events by sharing how an emergency shelter would have been a blessing to her as well as to many women right now.

Jennifer Bearman is serving as Acting Treasurer for Joe Schenkel. Jennifer is a Tax Supervisor with Baden Gage & Schroeder, LLC. Jennifer, who possesses nearly 30 years of professional accounting and consultation experience, is inspired to give her time and talent to help women in need.

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